COUSIN
JINNIE

WHITTAKER



COUSIN MINNIE

OR

The Feast of Life

BY

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NEW YORK

THOMAS WHITTAKER

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PREFACE.

To the many friends who desire to hear again from "The Bishop and Nannette" I present this spring "Cousin Minnie, or The Feast of Life"—a preparation for Confirmation, and the Supper of the Lord.

This will be followed, next year, by another volume, which will complete the series.

F. B. S.

April, 1880.

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COUSIN MINNIE.

CHAPTER I.

NANNETTE and Cousin Minnie sat in the bay window of the study, awaiting the return of the bishop from some pastoral call. Confirmation was appointed for the evening of All Saints' Day, and there was but a fortnight more for preparation.

Minnie had determined, in the strength of the Almighty Helper, to go straight forward in the path which the early action of her sponsors designed for her. She had been thinking much of the baptismal vows that she was so soon to take upon herself, and now she spoke gratefully of them to Nannette.

"It is so sweet and dear of Christian people to take the little babies out of an evil

world, and to place them in God's family and household," she said; "so very blessed that godfathers and godmothers come forward to promise that we shall walk in right ways, and that they help to train us so that it is easier for us to keep from going astray. I am sure I can answer with all my heart to the question, 'Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?' 'Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our Heavenly Father that he has called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God that he will give me his grace that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.'"

"My sponsors are such lovely old ladies! my godmothers, I mean," said Nannette, "they live far away, but they write me delightful letters; I suppose because dear mother is not here to guide me. You know, Minnie, sponsors are provided, so that if the parents die when the child is little, it may have Christian care and teaching. My god-

father is across the water. He says, 'If you had not your saintly grandfather, my child, I should oftener speak to you of the things that concern your soul; but his spiritual guidance is all that you need of earthly help, and you have long since learned where heavenly aid is to be found.' Only think, Minnie, how our English words have changed as they have come down to us! they used to call sponsors 'gossips.'"

"That is a dreadful word now," said Minnie, "one would not suppose that it had ever been applied to the people who were ready to make such promises of good behavior for the little children. My sponsors live very near us, and I go often to spend the day with them. They are sisters, and a brother of theirs, keeping house together—none of them married. They seem to be bound up in each other. They are good, earnest people, and speak much to me of holy living; but I have lacked the teaching that your grandfather gives about the Church, and the Prayer Book. To be sure the high-

est thing to learn is, to love God and keep his commandments, but I should be so glad to know all that the bishop tells you besides this, and so be a wise Churchman."

Nannette laughed at the word "wise." "Oh dear!" she said, "the more I learn, the more I see that is glorious to be learned, and so one is never wise here on the earth,—only, as grandpa says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and so the children of God are wise in a degree. But I ought not to say 'as grandpa says,' when I quote from the Bible. He told me long ago to speak always of the Holy Ghost as the author of every word in the Book of books. He says it is more needful now than ever that Christian people should remember this, when so many are speaking carelessly of the Word of God."

"Tell me about your confirmation, Nannette," said Minnie, "were you very timid?"

"Afraid of the people, do you mean, or afraid to assume the vows?"

"A little of both; I wish so much to go,

and mean so truly to, and yet I have a sort of shrinking from the view of the congregation, and a dread that I shall bring discredit upon the Church by an unfaithful life."

"I scarcely thought of any eye but the loving eye of our Heavenly Father," said Nannette, "grandpapa had spoken so earnestly to me of all that God has done for his children, that I wanted to fly to thank him, and to promise to try and do him honor. And then you know, Minnie, we are already members of Christ by our baptism, and it would be a great reproach to the Church if we were to refuse to ratify the covenant that was so early made for us. This is what grandpapa said to me when I spoke to him of the danger of my not living up to the holy vows."

"There is the Communion of the Lord's Supper," said Minnie, "I have the greatest shrinking from that. It seems to me so fearful a thing to 'eat and drink unworthily.'"

"Grandpapa will make all clear and plain to you. I am so glad he is to speak to us

on all of the 'Communion Office,'" said Nannette. "Here he comes now, so let us get the family together, that we may not lose a moment of our lesson."

The bishop showed no signs of weariness, though his day had been fully occupied. The deep reverence and sympathy of his flock were a perpetual refreshing to his spirit, and as he went from house to house in the parish, and from point to point in the diocese, he seemed to gain rather than to lose vigor and youth. Better still, his constant access to the river of the water of life, which renewed and strengthened him all the day long.

"Your face is as fresh and young as Uncle Hallam's," said Nannette, giving her grandfather the wonted kiss of greeting and petting his cheek with her little hand.

"Let us compare," said a voice in the hall, and Uncle Hallam himself walked into the study as composedly as if he had not just arrived from a long journey.

Such rejoicing! and so many questions! and

then a cozy supper, expressly for the traveller, and then the full gathering for the wished-for instruction.

Uncle Hallam said this was one of the greatest attractions just now—the thought of the good bishop's teaching concerning the Holy Eucharist, and the approaching rite of confirmation. He had a few weeks leisure, and he could not spend them in a happier home, and so here he was.

Phil had a bright fire in the drawing-room, and the family assembled there.

The nights were growing very cold, and it was a comfort to drop the curtains closely about the windows, and to get near the hearth.

Mr. Asher and Miss Bent came in late, and rejoiced at the delay caused by Uncle Hallam's arrival, since it gave them the beginning of the bishop's instructions.

"The Supper of our blessed Lord is a subject that I approach with a deeper sense than usual of my inability and weakness," said the good man. "Of course I shall not

attempt to explain to you what must ever be a mystery to the finite mind, but I can go over the 'Communion Office' with you, and we will all try to derive what profit we may from this blessed service. There are so many false views advanced by various individuals concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Christ, that it is the duty of every clergyman to give to his people the plain and positive teaching of the Church as she has derived it from the Word of God. And when once you have that truth, my dear children, let me ask you to keep it in your heart of hearts, and never to talk about holy mysteries in the flippant and profane manner which is too prevalent of late in the Christian world. It is right that every child of the Church should be so well instructed in these truths, that he can give an intelligent answer to all who ask him concerning them; but great judgment is necessary in broaching sublime subjects, and more harm than good is done by the unwise and stammering tongue. You will please

turn to 'the order for the administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.'"

All had their Prayer Books, and found the desired page.

"The Lord's Supper is a very precious name for the Christian family gathering around the Father's board," said Uncle Hallam. "I love to hear it, it takes me back to that last Passover in the 'upper room' at Jerusalem, where our blessed Lord Jesus ate and drank with his chosen ones, and thought of us in this distant generation, and provided that we also should often participate in the Paschal Feast."

The bishop asked Nannette if she could tell him what was the custom at the close of the Jewish Passover.

"The person officiating took a piece of bread and blessed it, and gave it to all who were present,—then a cup was filled with wine, over which they blessed God. This was called 'the cup of blessing,' and all drank of it, and then they sang a hymn of praise," said Nannette.

"You will perceive by this" said the bishop, "how far our Blessed Lord was from choosing novelties in the institution of the Christian Church, and how he took, and spiritualized the ancient rites and observances which God had long before ordered for the Jews. He only put away such ceremonial laws as had been designed for their especial observance, and he perpetuated all such holy rites as would be a blessing to the whole world through all time."

"It is pleasant to feel that we are part and parcel with the children of Israel," said Uncle Hallam. "Our grand, glorious old church, stretching backward through the ages, as far as the earliest Altar! We are too apt to forget the merging of the old into the new dispensation, as the perfect fulfilment of the law and the prophets."

"I should like to say more upon this point," said the bishop, "but we must keep close to our proposed theme, or our two weeks limit will be insufficient for all that I wish to explain to the children. I want

Minnie especially to have a thorough understanding of the Supper of the Lord, before she goes to this sacred feast."

"The name 'Lord's Supper' is offensive to the papists because it destroys entirely their notion of a sacrifice, and their use of private mass, but we have for this title the sanction of the Word of God in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians,—and also the authority of ancient writers."

"'Holy Communion' is still more beautifully suggestive, I think," said Miss Bent.

"Yes," replied the bishop, "with Christ Jesus our Divine Head, and with the saints in Paradise, and all the children of God upon the earth, we are put into sweet and hallowed fellowship as we participate in the great feast. This name 'Communion' we also find in the Corinthians, tenth chapter."

"The 'Eucharist' is the Greek name, signifying Thanksgiving," said Uncle Hallam; "people seem to be using that title lately."

"It is indeed a Eucharistic feast in which

we have a thankful remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby," said the bishop; "but the American revision of the Prayer Book has two most ancient and scriptural names attached to this Service. The title 'Liturgy,' has also been applied to the Holy Communion Service, as this is the prominent act of the Christian religion. 'The Service of the Altar' is another name, as all things that pertain to the celebrating of the Lord's Supper were said at the Altar."

"I often hear people say, simply, 'I am going to the Sacrament,'" said Mrs. Sands.

The bishop remarked: "It is better for them to designate the Supper of the Lord, since the Church has two Sacraments ordained by our gracious Redeemer. I am sure no one can intend to ignore Baptism, but it is always well for Churchmen to use clear and plain expressions that will not mislead."

Miss Bent said: "I wish the primitive usage of frequent communion in this holy

Supper could he restored. What devotion characterized the early disciples who 'continued daily in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'"

"Thank God, the Church is gradually returning to this frequent privilege," said the bishop. "The laxity grew first from the Romish perversion, which changed wholly the nature of this blessed Sacrament, mak ing it too awful for mortals to approach,—and secondly, from the low estimate put upon it by the denominations who do not regard it as a means of grace, and a sure help to the spiritual life and growth of such as receive it in true penitence and faith."

"When those two influences did not exist, and the children of our dear Lord held only the Church's pure and scriptural truth, they flocked gladly to God's Altar, and considered it the worst of ills to be excommunicated. or to be kept away."

"The first rubric makes it the duty of the minister to banish all whom he knows to

be evil livers, or to have wronged their neighbors by word or deed, so that the congregation is offended," said Nannette, looking at the rule.

"Until they have repented and amended, and satisfied the congregation, and recompensed the wronged parties, or signified the purpose to do so," said the bishop. "The English Prayer Book had also a rubric to the effect that 'so many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion,' shall signify their names to the curate, at least some time the day before."

"This made it easier for the ministers to know wether any evil liver presented himself," said Uncle Hallam. "It would be very hard to pass one by at the Altar, and refuse the sacred emblem of a Saviour's dying love."

"The rubric is very strict," said the bishop. "It continues to say that the minister 'shall use the same order with those between whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign, not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's Table, until he knows them to be reconciled.'"

"If one party forgives and is disposed to live in peace and charity, and the other is obstinate in his frowardness, the penitent party is admitted, and the other restrained, I perceive," said Miss Bent. "But the Church does not often use this discipline, does it?"

"The clergy are timid in this respect," replied the bishop. "We *must* act where a notorious evil liver comes to the Lord's Supper; but such are generally deterred by their own conscience, and it is difficult for a man to judge his fellow man in regard to fitness or unfitness, in minor matters,—so that it has come to be pretty much as in the chamber at Jerusalem, the betrayer of the Lord Jesus may sit at table with him, and the master of the feast alone can discern and deal with him."

"It would seem as if this Holy Communion must at least keep Christian people from malice and hatred," said Mrs. Sands.

"No doubt it has its blessed influence and restraint," said the bishop.

"But for these institutions of our dear

Lord, who knows to what fearful lengths we might not go toward each other in our envyings and bitterness and strife. It is humiliating to think how like untamed beasts we might be."

Nannette looked with surprise at her grandfather. The image of meekness he seemed to her. Could it be that under any circumstances in life he would show a wrathful and unforgiving temper?

Appearing to understand the tenor of her thoughts, he said, "It is all of grace that we are enabled to dwell together in unity. The rules of polite society could never bring men to such gentle agreement as the love of Christ effects in them."

"How terrible the primitive method of excommunication," said Miss Bent, "I recollect we were speaking of that in your review of the Morning Prayer."

Uncle Hallam said, "It is wonderful how the Church protects her children in every way! Lest the clergyman from personal pique or revenge repulse a communicant, he

is obliged 'to give an account of the case to the "ordinary" or bishop, as soon as conveniently may be,' so that the bishop may reverse or ratify the sentence, as he shall judge fitting."

"I do not like to think that a priest of God could have such a wicked motive," said Nannette.

"We must thank our Heavenly Father that such a case rarely, if ever, occurs," replied the bishop; "but if it should chance to be, here is the safeguard."

"The next rubric, both in the American and English book, is concerning the Communion Table," said Nannette. "'It is to have a fair, white linen cloth upon it, and is to stand in the body of the church, or in the chancel, where morning and evening prayer are appointed to be said, and the priest, standing at the north side of the table, shall say the Lord's Prayer and the Collect following, the people kneeling.' The English rubric ends here, and the American adds, 'but the Lord's Prayer may be omit-

ted if morning prayer hath been said immediately before.'"

"You generally say 'Altar,' I notice, grandpapa, instead of 'Communion Table.'"

"Yes, my child, simply because it was the primitive custom for the first three hundred years after Christ. It was then so constant and familiar a name that history says, 'When in the fourth century Athanasius called it a Table,' he thought himself obliged to explain that he meant 'Altar.' It was not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Puritan rage was so fierce against every thing that seemed to it a superstition, that this word 'Table' was substituted, the word 'Altar' conveying to prejudiced minds only the Romish conception of the Lord's Supper, into the actual sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. It makes small difference, my dear children, whether we call it 'Table' or 'Altar,' since the Church in her liberality allows both; but we must take care that in our minds we do not with the one word pull down the Sacrament of the Lord's Sup-

per to a common meal, and that with the other we do not associate the Roman idea that Christ is offered again and again for us."

"The 'Table' or 'Altar' was always fenced in to keep it from being treated with irreverence or disrespect," said Uncle Hallam.

Mrs. Sands asked if the reverence thus paid, was not by many thought a superstition.

The bishop said, "there are occasional remarks made to that effect, but the children of the Church can see the propriety and decency of all her prescribed usages, and it would shock any devout person to see things that are set apart for sacred purposes, diverted to any profane use."

"Chancel, means rail, does it not?" asked Nannette.

"It is derived from 'cancellaria' 'a railing,' said her Uncle. 'Kneeling at the chancel' is an ordinary expression; we know that means by the rail that encloses the Altar."

"The fair white linen cloth seems appro-

priate," said Miss Bent. "I believe they used to call it 'palla altaris,' to distinguish it from the 'corporis palla' which was thrown over the consecrated bread."

"With regard to the 'corporal' or linen cloth which covers the bread, the design is said by some to be to prevent the 'elevation' and the 'gazing,'" said the bishop.

"Why is the rubric so particular to tell that the minister shall stand at the north side of the Table?" asked Minnie.

"Only that he may the better be seen and heard by the congregation," said the bishop. "As our Altar is placed in the church, the north side is the right hand, and the proper position for the officiating priest. These matters would seem trifling to people who have not observed the Church's care to have 'all things done decently and in order,' as the Holy Scripture directs. We must have rules and regulations for the guidance of clergy and people, and to these we are bound to adhere so long as we have put ourselves under their government."

Uncle Hallam said: "The Communion Service is to be said nowhere else but at the Table of the Lord; and when the first or morning service is ended at the desk, the clergyman proceeds within the chancel."

"We sing a hymn, or psalm, or anthem called the 'Introit,' or 'entrance,' while the priest is going from the desk to the chancel," said the bishop. "It is an old custom of the Church, and seems appropriate, to distinguish the one service from the other, now that we have both at the same season. There was a rubric enjoining this introit, in the first book of Edward VI. The second book omitted this rubric, but the practice of singing at this point is general both in England and America."

"How fitting it is that our Lord's Prayer is set at the beginning of this Service," said Uncle Hallam, "both the Prayer and the Sacrament being of divine institution. The English always use it, though previously said at morning prayer."

"It could not be called 'vain repetition,'

even if several times used in the cou.se of our morning service" said the bishop, "but it is the habit of most of our clergy, after morning prayer, to begin the Communion Office with that precious collect which embraces both the Eastern and Western petition for purity of body and soul before coming to God's Altar."

"This collect is said to be from St. Gregory's Sacramentary, is it not?" asked Miss Bent.

"Yes," replied the bishop, "and it is perfect in devoutness of expression. There are few hearts that are not touched by it. It comes so appropriately in this place, too, just before we have the reading of the Commandments, which in our baptism we have promised to keep. The ancient people of God had to be purified by washing, and by abstinence from fleshly lusts, before they were permitted to hear the voice of God in these laws spoken by Moses; and so we are to ask for the cleansing of our hearts by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that we

may perfectly love God, and worthily magnify his holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Grandpapa it is a very sweet thought that God knows all that is in our hearts, and that we can not have any secrets from him," said Nannette.

"To his dear children it is," replied the bishop. "The wicked would gladly hide themselves from the All-seeing Eye."

"You mean such as commit sin willingly or wilfully, grandpapa. I think that when we do wrong without meaning to, it is a real comfort to feel that our Heavenly Father sees us through and through, and will judge us truly."

"You are right, daughter; a loving disciple will be like a faithful child, wishing never to hide even his faults from a parent. I am glad that you have this desire of perfect openness with God."

"In rehearsing the Commandments the minister is ordered by the rubric to turn himself to the people, and to say them dis-

tinctly, and the people are to continue kneeling," said Miss Bent.

The bishop said: "The priest speaks now, as from God, he therefore stands and turns toward the congregation, and gives the Law, slowly and deliberately, as its importance demands,—and the people receive it humbly, as becomes those who are constantly offending and in need of pardon. They are to listen to each commandment, as to the voice of God himself, and are to say after each of the nine, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this Law,' and after the tenth, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy Laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.' We must never forget that this Law of God is what we engage anew to keep whenever we come to the Holy Supper of our dear Lord. It is well, therefore, that we hear it again and again. The Commandments were inserted at the revision of King Edward's Liturgy in 1552. In 1789, the General Convention in the United States of America added to the Law the Gospel

Summary and the prayer following, as in the Scotch Liturgy. The Scotch book allowed the use of the Summary instead of the Commandments; we use it in addition to the Decalogue."

Nannette remarked: "It says in the rubric, 'the minister may say, hear also what our Lord Jesus Christ saith. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'"

"This word from the New Testament is to give greater weight, so that no man may reject the Commandments as the law of Moses, since they have the authority of our Lord Christ," said the bishop. "It is optional with the clergy to read it or not; but it is generally used. You will see that it suggests some of the choicest parts of the Church Catechism."

"You mean our duty towards God, and our duty towards our neighbor," said Minnie.

"Yes, a perfect lesson for every son and daughter of the Church to learn, the whole spirit of the Law and of the Gospel is in those teachings of the Catechism. I would that mothers and fathers were more particular to impress them upon the hearts and minds of their children, so that their lives might be really governed by them. They are too often set aside for lessons that have not this scriptural weight and value."

Uncle Hallam said: "The good old-fashioned way of gathering the little family every Lord's day for the recitation of the Catechism, might with great profit be revived by Christian parents. I well remember that at eighteen years of age I was expected to join my little brothers and sisters in this godly and healthful exercise."

"I am much afraid that the glorious institution of the Sunday-school, which was intended originally for such as had no relig-

ious teaching at home, has made all classes of people neglectful of family instruction," said the bishop. "God be praised for the gathering together of the little children for the Sunday-school hours! but let no parent think himself absolved from personal attention to the souls of those who are entrusted to his especial charge."

"The Church shows herself a most wise parent in keeping God's Commandments so constantly before her children," said Uncle Hallam. "We are not permitted to excuse ourselves for sin, with the plea that we forget God's holy law."

"And then," said Mr. Asher, "we are helped to self-examination by thinking over each Commandment as it is read to us, and by seeing how sadly and how frequently we have broken every one."

"The prayer that follows is of great comfort," said the bishop, "for if God does 'vouchsafe to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of his laws, and in the works of his command-

ments, we shall, through his most mighty protection, both here and ever, be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord Jesus Christ.' This collect also occurs in the Confirmation Service, and in the English book among the Post Communion prayers."

"How constantly the Church speaks of the purity, and sanctity, and preservation of body, as well as of soul," said Miss Bent.

"She is always pointing to the resurrection of this flesh," said the bishop, "and she wishes her children to grow more and more into the image of her dear Lord, who has redeemed both soul and body from everlasting death."

"Since Church and State are connected in our Fatherland, it is all-important that devout prayers be offered up for the rulers and the bishop. The past history of the Church in England proves how important to her welfare it is to have the right sort of temporal governors; moreover, it is a part of the teachings of our holy mother, that we hold in reverence, and that we obey the powers that be."

"'To love, honor and obey the civil authority,'" said Nannette, quoting from the Catechism, "'and to submit myself to all my governors,'—'to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters.'"

"The English prayer is, that the people may 'faithfully serve, honor, and humbly obey the king, in God, and for God, according to God's blessed word and ordinance,'" said Miss Bent. "It is always safe to use such a petition as that. One could not yield the Divine Law for the dictates or commands of an earthly king."

"We have our prayers for our rulers in the morning service and in the Litany," said Nannette.

"And in the petitions for the Church militant," said the bishop. "We shall come to that presently, but permit me to speak once more about the solemn Law that is read before us every time we partake of the Holy Communion. I wish you to understand fully how diligent you ought ever to be in applying this strict test to your soul. Even the

heathen used to call themselves to account at the close of every day, for their actions. They would not sleep until they had answered to their own souls as to where they had been, and what they had done. The Jews used to spend a whole month before their feast of Expiation, in examining their lives, in view of the great day of final judgment,—and surely it is a small thing for Christians to set apart a solemn time for reflection and repentance before participating in the Supper of our Lord."

"There is so much in these Commandments to bring to mind our sins," said Mr. Asher. "We can so easily have other Gods than our Heavenly Father, if we love, or delight in, or trust, others more than we do him,—and we can worship images, by having false notions of God, and we can take his holy name in vain by speaking of him irreverently, or taking a false oath, or speaking lightly of solemn ordinances,—and we can break the Sabbath day, by a careless neglect of the public worship, or by spending the

hours in idleness, or in occupations not in accordance with holy times."

"Yes, indeed," said the bishop. "And we may fail in deference and honor to our parents by omitting little duties, and by impatience of any yoke which they may rightfully put upon us; and we may murder our neighbor by the secret wish to be rid of him, or by leading him into vices that may tend to death; and we may pamper the body by intemperate eating or drinking. Then there are unchaste thoughts that defile the soul, and the listening to words that are not seemly. Oh, 'there are so many ways of breaking God's Holy Laws.'"

Uncle Hallam spoke of the eighth commandment. He said: "Men run into debt without hope or purpose of payment, they are wasteful of goods entrusted to them, they exact more than a legal interest, and they take from their neighbor's good name. There is need enough that we say, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.'"

"The heart is so naturally turning to evil," said the bishop, "only God can convert it to the right."

"People bear false witness very often at the courts, do they not?" asked Nannette.

"Not only before the magistrate," said the bishop, "but they privately publish evil reports and slanders that injure their brethren, and they permit a person to be traduced, when by a timely word they might establish his innocence; and they flatter the wicked, calling evil good, and good evil."

"It seems to me that the last law is the easiest to break," said Nannette. "One wants so much that is his neighbor's."

"Not only the wishing for of things that God has seen fit to withhold from us, is our sin here," said the bishop, "but we undervalue the good gifts that he has really bestowed, and we forget to give him thanks for our many blessings, while we murmur at his wise providence."

"How dreadful it all seems, grandpapa,

how is it possible for any body to keep God's laws?"

"If we try with all our heart, and yet fail of a perfect obedience, as we surely must, God is pleased to impute to us the righteousness of his dear Son," said the bishop.

"It is so precious to take refuge in this Saviour," said Mr. Asher. "By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves,—it is the gift of God."

"Our petition for mercy is an earnest of God's dear love," said the bishop. "Under the old dispensation, the law was given amid dreadful thunderings. Now, we behold the Lamb of God, and we plead his sacrifice for sin, and so dare to ask for mercy. The law is but our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, and in this blessed Saviour we find hope, and pardon, and peace. So soon as our hearts are by God's grace inclined towards holiness, what a pleasant path it is for us to walk in! How many beautiful blossoms and fruits we gather as we go on, in the light! How sweet is our communion with

that Friend of Sinners, who gave his life to redeem us from the curse of the law! What a glorious foretaste we have of the happy world that is to come, and what bright anticipations of a bliss that is eternal, in the presence of our dear Lord, and his holy angels, and the beloved saints who have gone before and await us now in Paradise! Oh, it is worth all the struggles that we have to make, if finally, through the strength of Jesus, we overcome sin, and enter in through the gate to the Eternal City."

CHAPTER II.

"THE Collect for the day comes next," said Nannette. "It is so pleasant to follow out the Christian Year! Every child may know what the day is, whether he goes to church or not, and so may read the same holy lessons at home, that the people are hearing in the consecrated place."

"It is a decided help to those who for any cause are deprived of the services in the temple of the Lord," said the bishop. "The beautiful agreement of every portion of the offices set forth in the Prayer Book, must impress the mind, when one faithfully observes the order. It is an exercise which I desire that all my people may avail themselves of, when they can not enter the Lord's house."

"Lame Milly reads the Morning and Evening Service every day, upon her bed," said

Miss Bent. "It is wonderful what progress in the divine life that little cripple has made, since she has been confined to her poor room! I feel ashamed of my slow advance, when I have so many more privileges than she seems to possess."

"Contrition is one step forward, my child," said the bishop. "To see and lament a delinquency, should be the spur to repair and improve. We all have much to learn from dear little Milly, whose couch of pain is made to her a path of light, by the right use of her affliction."

"After the Collect the minister shall read the Epistle, saying 'The epistle is written in (such a chapter,) beginning at (such a verse, whatever it may be)'" said Nannette, "or, 'The portion of scripture appointed for the Epistle—.' It generally is from one of the Epistles of the New Testament, I have noticed; only a few times from the Old Testament, or from the Acts of the Apostles, or Revelation. When the Epistle is ended the minister shall sav, 'Here endeth the Epistle.'"

"It is then the duty of the clergyman to say, 'The holy Gospel is written, &c.,'" said Minnie; "and the people rise at the moment of the announcement, and say, 'Glory be to thee, O Lord.'"

"This ascription of praise is borrowed from ancient Liturgies," said the bishop. "The people rise at the words of the Master. To the Son of God we pay reverence above all other messengers. The Epistles are from his servants, and we sit to hear them."

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, is it not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, daughter: you will not mistake me when I say that in this order of the Church we make a distinction between the words of the Epistle, and those of the Gospel. We all know that both are binding upon the hearts and lives of men; but at this sacred Feast, in remembrance of the dying love of our Lord Jesus, it seems but fitting that we show in every possible way, honor above all to the blessed Saviour."

Mr. Asher said: "This reading of por-

tions from the Epistles and Gospels is a primitive custom in the Communion Service; and they were put in this place before the Offertory, that the catechumens might hear them, as these catechumens were dismissed before the consecration of the elements in the Lord's Supper."

"The catechumens used to be people who were born of heathen parents, and were not yet baptized, I think, grandpapa."

"Yes, my child, and they were not permitted to stay during the Communion Service."

"There is a rubric at the end of our Confirmation Office, that says, 'None shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed,'" said Minnie.

"If we are not willing and ready to obey the commands of our blessed Lord, we have no right to the great privileges of his Church," said the bishop. "If we are willing and ready, we shall seize upon the first opportunity;—and as there may not be a

visitation of the bishop for some time after we have made up our minds to assume in our own name the baptismal vows, we are not deprived of the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but are allowed 'the strengthening and refreshing our souls,' even before the Apostolic hands are laid upon us."

"The catechumens, as unbaptized, of course could not be present at the table of our Lord, any more than a Jew, unpurified, could eat of the Passover."

"How perfectly we see the ancient types in the new dispensation," said Miss Bent. "I take great satisfaction in comparing them, and a real joy in the exceeding glory of this latter house."

"Any one who chooses, can remain as a witness, nowadays, grandpapa."

"Yes, my child, even the unbaptized and it may lead him to desire to be classed with the people of God."

Mr. Asher spoke of the reading of the Epistles as the harbingers of the Gospels. He said: "They are full of precepts as to

the Christian life, but the Gospels present to us Christ Jesus as our perfect example and pattern."

Mrs. Sands said: "I have observed that in some of our churches they have the ascription 'Thanks be to thee, O Lord,' after the Gospel."

"We have no rubric for this in our Communion Office," said the bishop. "The practice is an ancient one, and is very appropriate; but it is better to keep very close to the Prayer Book, lest while some take the liberty to introduce good things, others bring in what may be objectionable. It is made a solemn obligation for all the clergy of the Church to adhere to her doctrines, and canons, and discipline; and if any man desire to break away from these, there is room for him elsewhere. So long as he is a child of the Church, let him be an obedient, and loving, and faithful one, even in what he may think little matters."

"The next rubric is for the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, unless one has been read in

the morning service," said Nannette. "It comes after Holy Scripture here, as in the Morning Prayer after the Lessons."

"The English book has only the Nicene Creed, in the Communion Office," said Mrs. Sands.

"We can use this if it is preferred," said the bishop.

Miss Bent asked if there were not a little controversy lately about the Nicene Creed, and the bishop said:

"There has been; but it seems to me without necessity. The Apostles' Creed was explained, in some of its articles, at Niceae, to refute the Arian heresy. This Nicene Creed was still farther explained at a subsequent council at Constantinople, about eighty years after, when other heresies would have crept nto the Church; and it appears to me that as an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, and a stay to proposed errors, it should meet no criticism. One branch of the Church Catholic rejects a certain clause, as I told you in my remarks upon the morning service, I think"

"The Filioque—'And the Son.' I remember," said Nannette.

"Yes," said the bishop; "this was added at a later date than the Constantinopolitan council, and caused a schism between the Latin and Greek Churches."

Mr. Asher spoke of the command, by the council of Toledo, about 600 years after Christ, "*That every communicant should, after the manner of the Eastern Church, repeat this Creed with an audible voice, that so they may both show what faith they profess, and that by right believing, their hearts may be purified and prepared for this holy Sacrament.*"

The bishop said: "I have translated literally for you, the exposition of the Apostles' Creed, which was made at the council of Nice, in the year of our Lord 325, yet is almost a repetition of a Creed known to have been used in Cesarea, in Palestine, as early as the year of our Lord 250.

"It reads thus: 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:

"'And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Begotten of the Father, only Begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those in earth; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down, And was incarnate, And was made man; Suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and cometh again to judge the quick and the dead:

"'And in the Holy Ghost.'

"But those that say that there was a time when he was not, and that before he was begotten he was not; and that he was made out of things which are not; or who say that he is of another substance, or that the Son of God is changeable, or can be another —these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

"This Creed was afterward enlarged, at subsequent councils, as heresies threatened;

and the whole Western Church holds it as our English version has it in the Prayer Book. The latter part was in the ancient Creeds, but was omitted by the Nicene fathers, as they did not design to publish a complete Creed, but were only concerned with the truths respecting the divinity of our Saviour."

"It seems to me that as an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, and a refutation of the errors that arose from time to time, the version which we have is perfect," said Mr. Asher.

The bishop replied: "A comparison with the Constantinopolitan, as well as with the original Nicene, must prove this to every impartial mind. The Church has guarded faithfully all her avenues, from the approach of error. Let us thank God for it.

"The Nicene Creed is used in the Communion Service, to show that we not only hold the general Creed, but that we are also free from every heresy; and surely you must all see, my dear children that we can not be worthy partakers of the Holy Supper-

unless we have a sincere belief in the majesty of the gracious Father against whom we have sinned,—in the divinity and incarnation, passion and resurrection of the Son, by whom we ask pardon,—and in the divine nature and sanctifying efficacy of the Holy Ghost, whereby we hope to be enabled to keep our covenant."

"You quote so often from our good Dean Comber," said Miss Bent.

"There is great devoutness in his reflections," replied the bishop. "It is satisfying for me to know and to repeat his words."

Miss Bent asked if the Baptismal covenant, a belief in "the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost," were not in itself a sufficient Creed, if the nature and attributes of the blessed Trinity had not been by some, misconceived and misinterpreted.

"Yes," replied the bishop, "it is because of the perversions of men, that the Church has given us these sound words concerning the primary truths of our religion.

"The rubric after the Creed is, that 'The

minister shall declare unto the people what holy days or fasting days are in the week following to be observed; and if occasion be, shall notice be given of the Communion, and of the bans of matrimony, and other matters to be published. Then shall follow the sermon, after which the minister, when there is a Communion, shall return to the Lord's Table and begin the Offertory, saying one or more of these sentences following, as he thinketh most convenient.'"

"The English book speaks of the homilies set forth, or hereafter to be set forth by authority," said Mrs. Sands.

The bishop said: "At the time of the Reformation in England, the clergy were very illiterate, and some of them were suspected to favor the Church of Rome. It was for these two reasons that two books of sermons were prepared as 'necessary for those times.' One book was supposed to have been prepared by Archbishop Cranmer, and was set forth in the time of Edward the VI. The second book was published in Queen

Elizabeth's reign, and is thought to be the work of Bishop Jewel. Our American revisors left out the rubric concerning the homilies, because they were especially adapted to the motherland. Even there they have fallen greatly into disuse, since the better intellectual culture of the clergy, and their soundness in the primitive faith. We retain the thirty-fifth article on homilies, but with an explanation which dispenses with the reading of them in the churches."

Mr. Asher said: "The deacons of our time are not permitted to preach their own sermons, unless licensed by the bishop. The priests have full authority given at their ordination. They are supposed to be well established in doctrine."

"The bans of matrimony are not often published now," said Nannette.

"The laws of the state usually govern such matters," said her grandfather. "Every minister is left to the direction of those laws, in every thing that regards the civil contract between the parties."

"What does ban mean?" asked Minnie.

"It comes from a vitiated Latin word, *ban-num*, or *bandum*, or from *bannire*, which signifies to issue such an edict or proclamation," said the bishop. "It is said to have come into use about the seventh or eighth century."

"Marriage being a divine institution, ought always to be religiously celebrated, ought it not?" said Miss Bent.

"Christians would be satisfied with nothing short of this," replied the bishop. "Our beautiful marriage office shows the Church's idea of the deep solemnity of this rite; and the English book is still more particular to tell the duties of husband and wife, as set forth in the Sacred Epistles, and to advise a participation in the Holy Eucharist, either at the time of marriage, or at the first oppor tunity after."

"I wish this rubric had been retained in our American revision," said Mr. Asher. "There seems to me nothing more fitting than that parties who enter upon so sol-

emn and important a life, should receive this strength from on high."

The bishop said: "I heartily agree with you that this is a great privilege to Christian souls; but I think much of the wisdom of our revisers, who no doubt weighed well the question before omitting this rubric. We must recollect that many vain and giddy people enter into the holy estate of matrimony, and that such are not prepared to obey such a rule; therefore it was better to leave it optional with the parties concerned. If any such desire this sacred seal to their nuptial vows, they can be gratified. The rubric in the English book is, however, but a permission rather than a law: 'It is convenient, or proper, that the new-married persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their marriage.'"

I shall receive it," said Nannette.

Her grandfather smiled. He wished to put that event of matrimony very far off, for her.

Miss Bent referred to the announcement

of the holy days: "Was not this partly to prevent the keeping of the many festivals that Rome had brought into the Church?" she asked.

"Yes, partly," replied the bishop. "In the early days of the Reformation, the bishops were very careful to ask, in their visitations, whether any of their curates had bid other days than those appointed by the new calendar."

"Rome has a saint for almost every day in the year," said Mrs. Sands. "It takes from the solemnity to have so many."

"The reformed branch of the Church Catholic has kept to our Lord Jesus and his Apostles," said the bishop.

"And the Blessed Virgin," said Nannette.

"Only as the mother of our dear Lord and Saviour; not with Rome's specific adoration," replied the bishop.

Mrs. Sands said: "The English book has more in this rubric concerning the announcements: 'Briefs and citations, and excommunications, shall be read, and nothing shall

be proclaimed or published in the Church during the time of divine service, but by the minister, nor by him any thing but what is prescribed in the rules of this book, or enjoined by the king, or by the ordinary of the place.'"

"This shuts out all unseemly announcements," said the bishop.

"Such as fairs, and calls to places of worldly entertainment, and notices that may be handed in by individuals who do not have a right conception of the Church, and her office to men," said Uncle Hallam. "These would profane the consecrated place, and bring it to a level with a common hall."

Miss Bent asked, if one reason for notifying the feasts and fasts were not because there had grown such laxity in the observance of them?

The bishop said: "Yes, the one extreme of superstition has run into the other of careless neglect; and the duty of the clergy is so to keep the obligations of the Church before the congregation, that they can not be

forgetful of them. The precious round of blessed services thus comes to be as familiar and sweet as the birthdays and the solemn memorials of our own dear households."

Uncle Hallam spoke of the "Offertory," coming in the Communion Service just after the profession of our faith. "We are expected to show that faith by our works, now," he said.

"The Communion alms are devoted to the poor; are they not?" asked Minnie.

"This is common in our day, unless otherwise specified by the donors," replied the bishop; "but the rubric after the sentence is, that 'whilst these sentences are in reading, the deacons, churchwardens, or other fit persons appointed for that purpose, shall receive the alms for the poor, *and other devotions* of the people, in a decent basin, to be provided by the parish for that purpose, and reverently bring it to the priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the holy table.

"'And the priest shall place upon the

table so much bread and wine as he shall think sufficient; after which done, he shall say, Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant.'"

"The rubric implies other gifts, then," said Miss Bent.

"In the primitive times, when this Holy Communion was more frequent," said the bishop, "very costly offerings were presented, such as deeds and donations of lands and revenues, and many things to testify the people's love to our Lord Jesus: they brought bread and wine and corn, and some of them 'all the things that they possessed.' Some of the offerings were for the relief of the poor, and some for the maintenance of the Bishop and Clergy, and the Church."

"It must have been pleasant to the ministers of God to feel that all their living came from the altar at which they served," said Miss Bent.

"Would that the primitive usage in this respect might be restored," said the bishop. "Then would clergy and people feel more

truly the Providence that feeds and blesses and strengthens. In ancient times, it was considered a great punishment to be denied the privilege of giving alms at the holy table. Only persons of an infamous life were rejected with their offerings."

"The scriptural sentences are to stir us up to giving, I suppose," said Nannette.

"Yes," replied the bishop. "God's word must surely constrain us to our full duty."

"Grandpapa," said Nannette, "ought any thing else, a hymn or anthem, to take the place of the Scripture sentences, when the offerings are being collected?"

"I think the Church has wisely ordered, and should be implicitly obeyed," said the bishop. "Some of the old liturgies had an anthem after the Gospel. This was sung while the people made their oblations at the altar; but if it had been better in the estimation of our revisers, it would have been placed in our book instead of these sentences. I am content with the present arrangement."

Minnie asked if people ought not to set apart strictly a certain portion of their pos-sessions every week, for Christian purposes, as they did in the early ages.

"It is an apostolic injunction," said the bishop. "If we were governed by this rule, the treasury of the Lord would be always full, and our own coffers less generally empty, —for 'whoso honoreth me, him will I also honor,' saith the Lord of hosts, and 'he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously.'"

Nannette asked about the "love-feast" that in primitive times preceded or followed the Holy Communion.

The bishop said: "I will give you Tertul-lian's description. He says: 'The nature of our "*Cœna*" may be gathered from its name, which is the Greek term for love; however much it may cost us, it is real gain to incur such expense in the cause of piety, for we aid the poor by this refreshment; we do not sit down to it till we have first tasted of prayer to God; we eat to satisfy our hunger; we drink no more than befits the temperate; we

feast as those who recollect that they are to spend the night in devotion; we converse as those who know that the Lord is an ear-witness.

"'After water for washing hands, and lights have been brought in, every one is required to sing something to the praise of God, either from the Scriptures, or from his own thoughts: by this means, if any one has indulged to excess, he is detected. The feast is closed with prayer.' Contributions or oblations, of provisions or money, were made on these occasions, and the surplus, after the feast, was applied to the relief of orphans and widows, and the destitute and sick."

Uncle Hallam read St. Chrysostom's account: "The first Christians had all things in common, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; but when that equality of possession ceased, as it did even in the Apostles' time, the '*Agape*,' or love-feast, was instituted in the room of it. Upon certain days, after partaking of the Lord's Supper, they

met at a common feast, the rich bringing provisions, and the poor, who had nothing, being invited."

The bishop remarked: "These feasts ran into excess, and were the occasion for scandal, and so were condemned and given up. You will find allusions to their perversions from the original use, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, the eleventh chapter, where he speaks of the 'spots in their feasts of charity,' and of 'every one taking before others his own supper, and one is hungry, and the other drunken.' The rich no longer waited for the poor, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was profaned by the gluttony that followed; so that many among the recipients were weak and sickly, and asleep, not discerning the Lord's body."

Mrs. Sands recalled the bishop to the Offertory sentences. "They are not all taken from the Canonical books," she said.

The bishop replied: "Two are from the Apocryphal book of Tobit. He was a generous instance of alms-giving. You remem-

ber, the Church permits us to read portions of the Apocrypha, for example of life, and instruction of manners."

Mr. Asher said: "The Jews always joined alms-giving with their prayers and daily sacrifices, and we are commanded in Holy Scripture to bring our gifts to the Christian altar. It is said that prayer was by our Saviour inclosed between alms and fasting, and therefore they are so called *its two wings*, without which it will scarce fly so high as the throne of God."

"My dear old author again," said the bishop. "I am glad some one else loves him as well as I do."

Uncle Hallam said: "If you will permit me, I will glance over what he remarks about the sentences. which the Church has provided in order to stimulate us to our duty, and I will only touch upon such things as I feel will be of profit to us practically. I do not think we should pass over these selections from Holy Writ, without showing to these children how wisely they are chosen,

and how our minds should dwell upon the lessons conveyed in them, while the offerings are being collected. I believe people would give with a freer hand, and a more appreciative, sober spirit, if they realized the fulness of these exhortations.

"'The light shining before men, that they may glorify God.' We must make our increased faith visible to the unrighteous by our works, that the ungodly may be attracted to know and love the Heavenly Father, and that they may be influenced by our example.

"The 'laying up our treasure above,' in the safe place where God will hold it for us, and give us the true interest.

"The 'Golden Rule,' or 'doing to others whatsoever we would have them do to us,' if we were sick, or poor, or naked.

"The calling upon the name of the Lord, and not doing his will: many prayers, and no true charity which brings in alms-giving as a proof of love.

"Then comes the example of Zaccheus, the publican who entertained our Lord Jesus

at his house, and in his presence gave half of his goods to the poor, and promised to make fourfold restitution to all whom he might have wronged."

The bishop said: "We Christian people may well hang our heads before this noble-hearted publican. We are willing to let ourselves off with just what the law requires, and to do no more. He went far beyond this demand, and showed the influence of the Saviour's words upon his heart."

Uncle Hallam continued to look over the sentences.

"The next care of the Church," he said, "is to show us who are the objects of our charity, or love,—the ministers, in the first five selections, and then the Christian poor. The clergy used to be chiefly maintained out of oblations, made at the time of the Holy Eucharist; and both law and gospel show how liberally the people ought to provide for those who minister to them in holy things. Even now some of the clergy have their support only from the free gifts of the

congregation; but when otherwise cared for, bare *dues* ought not by the people to be considered sufficient. A *free gift*, especially at Easter, should be made to these husbandmen and soldiers and shepherds, who give their lives and labor and care for our good."

The bishop said: "I wish to call your attention especially to the sentence from Corinthians. These people had been Jewish proselytes, and had now become Christians, and therefore St. Paul gives them the example of the provision made for the priests under the law, and then the gospel precept that 'they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.'"

"The priests had free cities and lands, and all the tithes, did they not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, and a large share of the offerings upon the altar, the benefit of all consecrated things; and the Levites, who served the priests, were nobly fed, and lived plentifully upon the best parts of the sacrifice."

"We must be cheerful givers," said Miss Bent.

"Yes," replied the bishop, "God loves only such. The disposition of the heart makes the value of the offering, in his sight; and it seems strange that any can give grudgingly of that which he receives so freely from the gracious Creator."

Uncle Hallam remarked:

"It is a wonder to me that the laity do not think more seriously of this next injunction: 'Let him that is taught in the word minister unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' Our pitiful gifts of worldly things are such small return for the gospel of salvation, which these ambassadors of God present to us, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves when we make small or backward provision for a clergyman's earthly support. And we must know, if we reflect upon this Scripture, that however we may hope for a future life of joy and glory in God's abundant kingdom, we do but deceive ourselves, if we are neglecting the solemn duty of dis-

pensing toward the comfort and ease of our spiritual advisers. If we are to reap hereafter according to that which we sow here, in this respect, some of us will have but slight reward, if any.

"I speak with all earnestness, for I have observed in many congregations too little thought on the subject. We need teaching and stirring up on this point; and if the clergy would always keep to these scriptural sentences, instead of permitting the choir to substitute something else, I believe we should be more faithful in our offerings."

Miss Bent said: "I have noticed one thing in some of our churches, and that is the loud playing of the organ during the reading of these sentences."

"That is all wrong," said the bishop. "When God speaks all other voices should be hushed. During the intervals of reading, solemn music is fitting."

Mr. Asher spoke of the warning to "do good to all men while we have time, and especially unto them that are of the house-

hold of faith." He said: "Many object to bestowing upon the unworthy; but our Lord teaches us that all who have need are true objects of our charity."

"But we are to provide more largely for our brethren who are nourished at the same table with us," said the bishop. "There should be no real suffering for lack of earthly good, among the children of our Father. If we had for each other that true love which is born of God, we should never pass by a brother's need. The Church's treasury for the Christian poor ought always to be full; and when we consider that we have but little time in which to do good, it should incite us to more zeal, lest we be suddenly cut off from all opportunity."

"Gold is not the best riches, grandpapa," said Nannette.

"What is the best, my daughter?"

"Godliness, with contentment," said the child.

"The Church's wisdom is shown in this, and what follows," said the bishop. "She

gives us God's word to the effect that whatever estimate we may put upon our worldly wealth, the Christian should know a higher good. The gold and the silver he should give liberally, feeling that there is better store for him laid up above, and knowing that he can carry nothing of this earthly wealth away with him when he dies. It is only as he makes friends of it by ministering to the necessities of God's poor, that he will hereafter find the blessedness of having had it to bestow."

"We can not purchase eternal life by almsgiving and good deeds, can we, grandpapa?"

"Nothing but the merits and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ can procure our salvation and eternal blessedness, my child; and yet 'God is well pleased with uch sacrifices as our distributing and doing good, and he will not forget any works and labor that proceedeth of love.' The sort of love that ministers to his saints, he accepts as if the ministery were to himself in person. We can not have any love toward God

dwelling in us, if we see our brother have need, and yet shut up our bowels of compassion from him."

Nannette read the words from Tobit. She said: "That first passage always comes into my mind when I meet a beggar in the street, and I feel condemned if I do not stop and give something."

"We can always give sympathy and good words, even where it would be injudicious to bestow money," said the bishop. "The turning away one's face from the poor, is the showing carelessness or indifference to his necessities. The children of God should be always gentle and tender toward all who ask an alms. 'God bless you!' has been often worth more to a beggar than a piece of gold, without heart; but we must take care that we are not content with the pity and sympathy alone, when we have a substantial relief to give, and know it to be needed."

"God only requires of us to be merciful after our power," said Uncle Hallam.

"But he will hold us to that," said the bishop. "'If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence *gladly* to give of that little.'

"The love of God and the prayers of the grateful poor are a reward indeed; and even though the money expended comes not back to us here, we must remember that we have lent it unto God, who will give us an hundred-fold interest both on earth and in heaven, by a sweet peace and joy in this life, and endless glory with himself in the life to come. God promises a blessing for such as provide for the poor and needy. He will deliver such in time of trouble."

"How precious the Offertory sentences are," said Miss Bent. "And when we have given our alms with all sincerity, according as God has blessed us, it seems so very fitting that they are reverently brought to the priest and placed upon the altar, or holy table, and that the beautiful prayer is used for the whole state of Christ's Church militant."

Mr. Asher said: "I like the ancient custom

of coming up to the rails of the altar and there presenting the offerings to the priests."

"The present way is in effect the same thing," said the bishop, "since the wardens, or those who collect the alms, bring them in the people's name to the priest, who humbly presents the alms upon the altar. It is right that the congregation rise at this moment, since no one would sit when making an offering even to an earthly king."

"The bread and wine are to be placed upon the table, before we say the prayer for the Church militant," said Minnie.

"This was the primitive way," replied the bishop. "You will remember that bread and wine were among the offerings brought to God's Church: of these elements given by the people, the priest took sufficient for the holy feast. So now, there are put bread and wine upon a side table near the altar; and from this provision the priest takes what he considers enough for such as shall communicate, and himself sets it upon the altar."

"When we pray for Christ's Church *mil-*

itant—we mean the Christians upon earth who are fighting against sin, do we not?" asked Nannette.

"Yes, daughter. We come before God with alms and oblations for the poor and needy, and for the cause of his Church. But there are many whom we can only reach by our prayers; therefore we add these that Almighty God may bestow his rich blessing, that he may inspire the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord, and we ask that all who confess his holy name may agree in the truth of his holy word and live in unity and godly love."

"This is so necessary a petition since the Christian world represents such a spectacle of disunion!" said Mr. Asher. "There is such variety of sentiment with regard to the truths of God's word! So little unity, or godly love!"

The bishop said: "'We beseech our Heavenly Father, so to direct and dispose the hearts of all Christian rulers, that they may truly and impartially administer justice, to

the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of his true religion and virtue.' I have said to you how very important to our holy religion it is to have righteous rulers, and how the prosperity of the Church has been impeded by wicked magistrates.

"Next we pray for the clergy, 'that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.'"

"What do we mean by '*lively* word'?" asked Minnie.

"The word that is quick and powerful to bring eternal life to the dead souls that will be influenced by it," said the bishop. "We wish the ambassadors of God so to preach and so to live, that the people may see in them the great power of the gospel of the Son of God.

"'Rightly and duly to administer God's holy sacraments,' means, according to the Divine institution and as the necessities of the Church require."

"It must help the clergy greatly, to have this prayer for grace going up from their people just before the celebration of the Holy Mysteries," said Miss Bent.

"It is indeed a precious comfort and aid,' said the bishop. "We feel so deeply our unworthiness to represent to the congregation, our Great High Priest in the dispensing of the sacraments, that we have need of the earnest supplications of the Church that God would bless and strengthen us by his Holy Spirit."

"The prayer continues for all of God's people," said Nannette, "'and especially for this congregation here present, that with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.'"

"We are to come right home to our own hearts and lives," said the bishop. "We must have the heavenly grace, before we can, without sin and hurt, partake of the Holy Supper. Let us use this petition, then,

with great fervor; and after we have asked God's help for our sin-sick souls, we can the better pray for 'comfort and succor for all who in this transitory life are in need, sickness, or any other adversity.'"

"That word 'transitory' is a comfort in itself," said Miss Bent. "This life will so quickly pass away, at longest.

"And then come sweet thoughts of our departed, and thanksgiving for the faith and fear that have enabled them to go hence in peace, and we ask for grace that we may follow their good examples, and with them be partakers of God's heavenly kingdom."

Uncle Hallam said: "I can not see how this petition can possibly be, by any, perverted to sanction prayers for the dead."

"The Church positively rejects that Romish doctrine," said the bishop. "It has no ground in Holy Scripture. The Christian departed are in 'rest and felicity.' We may repeat their names to ourselves as watchwords to incite us to as faithful combat, and as sure reward. We may rejoice in their

release from the ills of this mortal flesh, and beseech our Heavenly Father to give us like freedom in his own good time, and to bring us with them to our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his glorious and everlasting kingdom.

"Holy Job celebrated the funeral of his children with hearty praise, saying '*Blessed be the name of the Lord*'; and the earliest Christians followed this pattern, giving thanks for the righteous dead. As St. Chrysostom says, 'they praised God and gave him thanks for crowning the deceased and putting an end to his labors, for delivering him from fear, and taking him to himself.'

"There is no thought of Purgatory in the earliest times. The commemoration of example and virtues was and is sanctioned by the Church.

"Gradually the sweet and profitable remembrance of the faithful departed was changed by some to a belief that their condition in the eternal world might be influenced by our petitions. So St. Cyril of

Jerusalem and others thought; and out of such gradual perversions arose the monstrous Romish heresy which the Greek branch of the Church Catholic, as well as our own, refuses to accept. The Prayer Book compilers cast out the prayers for the dead, which the Roman missal has in its Communion Office.

"It is right that we give thanks for our dear ones gone to Jesus. Who does not lift up grateful heart and voice in this way? No more fear, no more danger, no more temptation, no more sorrow for them. We still struggle on in weakness, and sin, and suffering. It is blessed to look up with hope, to their estate of present joy, and to that endless future when we and they, with our redeemed souls and bodies ransomed and glorified, shall be forever together with God. I will praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for these happy souls gone before, and will ask, in the words of the Burial Service in the English book, 'Shortly accomplish the number of thine elect, and hasten thy kingdom.'"

"You mean the time when all the children of God will be in Heaven, grandpapa?"

"Yes, dear child."

"Whom do you mean by God's elect?" asked Mrs. Sands.

"What the Church means; all such as shall choose the proffered salvation, and obey the conditions, and strive manfully unto the end, for the beautiful crown prepared by our gracious Redeemer."

"There is a crown ready for every one who will take it, grandpapa."

"Certainly, my daughter. God will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

"Then it is to themselves that the wicked owe their condemnation."

"Yes, we may be sure of that.—'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life,' puts all blame upon the sinners. If we have no part in the bliss of Heaven, we shall have cast ourselves out from the glorious kingdom."

A deep solemnity pervaded the little circle. Every heart seemed communing with itself

Presently the bishop said: "The hour is late. I have been enticed beyond the usual time for this exercise; but I must before we part, tell you how ancient and venerable is this prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church militant. It is called, in the Greek Liturgies, 'the Catholic, or general Collect' and 'the prayer for peace.'

"St. Ambrose says that this prayer was always made before the consecration of the elements in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the very first part shows us the Apostolical teaching, 'to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men.'"

"St. Ambrose was bishop of Milan, and lived in the fourth century," said Nannette.

"I recollect your telling us about him in the Morning Service. The 'Te Deum' is ascribed to his composition."

"Your memory is good, daughter. Now, please call the servants, and we will commend ourselves to the care and protection of our blessed Lord before we seek our rest."

All hearts were touched by the bishop's

earnest thanksgiving for the precious Christian influence and example of dear ones now living in Paradise; and as each voice joined in the Lord's prayer, every soul felt the words, "Thy kingdom come," to mean, "Hasten the glorious time when the joyful resurrection shall make thy children complete in body and soul, and give them the heavenly bliss with thee, and with thy holy angels, forever and ever."

CHAPTER III.

MISS BENT was particular that Nannette and Minnie should always repeat the Collect for the day before going about their common lessons, and on Saturday mornings, it was her habit to have them recite the Catechism, and to question them very closely upon the various parts, and their associations with the baptismal vows.

She was especially careful just now to make them understand the latter part of the Church's instruction concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For Minnie's sake, she dwelt long upon the benefits of the faithful reception of the consecrated elements, and she tried to make perfectly plain to her the requirements of our blessed Lord.

And Minnie found it a real help to know

by heart the things demanded of those who "presume to eat of that Bread, and to drink of that cup"—namely:

"To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in charity with all men."

She knew very well that if she could go to the holy feast with this preparation of heart and life, the bread and wine would be to her no common food, and no dreadful eating and drinking to herself damnation, but that through it she would have strengthening and refreshing of soul, by the "Body and Blood of Christ, which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

The bishop was diligent, as the rubric demands, to instruct or examine openly in the church, upon Sundays or holidays, or some other convenient seasons, so many children of his parish sent unto him as he shall

think convenient, in some part of this Catechism.

He also taught his people their duty. "All fathers, mothers, masters, and mistresses shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices, who have not learned their Catechism, to come to the church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the minister until such time as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn."

Mr. Asher was speaking of this good old rule as the bishop's family came together to renew the subject of the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

He said: "I can not help wishing that so godly a practice continued in this our day."

The bishop remarked: "This rubric was to make provision for such as could not be rightly taught at home. Christian heads of households are expected to train their families in the way of holiness, but it is safer in every event, and the ordering of the church,

for the authorized stewards of God's holy mysteries to add to the home teaching the faithful and frequent public catechising in the Church, and to see to it that the faith once delivered to the saints has deep root in the hearts and minds of the children committed to their charge."

"I believe the ancient fathers were very urgent in the matter of catechising, were they not?" asked Miss Bent.

The bishop replied: "They took great care that the catechumens should be rightly taught in the principles of Christianity; and in the time of the Reformation, the divines who cast away the superstitions of Rome were so diligent in their instruction of the people, that Rome became alarmed, and acknowledged that the 'Protestants had done great mischief to her, not only by their tongues, but especially by those writings called catechisms.' The Council of Trent therefore composed the Roman Catechism, which the priests are enjoined to teach the people."

Mrs. Sands asked what the primitive catechumens were taught.

The bishop said: "They were to learn *before* their baptism and confirmation the Baptismal Vow, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. These, with the Ten Commandments, formed the whole of our Catechism at the time of the Reformation; but, as there seemed a further need, King James I. appointed the bishops to add a short and plain explanation of the Sacraments. Bishop Overall, then Dean of St. Paul's, London, penned it, and it was allowed by the other bishops, and our Catechism is now said to excel all other catechisms that were ever in the world."

Mr. Asher said: "That may well be conceded, for there is nothing in it but what the whole body of Christians, the world over, might agree in, so thoroughly conformed to Holy Scripture is it in all its teachings."

Miss Bent said: "I suppose the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were originally taught to baptized children,

because their sponsors had promised concerning these; but it is not true that this is all that the Church requires of those coming to Confirmation; is it?"

"Whoever says this about our holy mother lacks a knowledge of her blessed teachings," replied the bishop. "There is not a Christian body in the world that demands a more thorough renunciation of what is sinful, and a more zealous performance of what is right than this branch of the Church of the living God asks and expects of her children. Let all who doubt, examine faithfully the office for Infant Baptism, the Catechism, the office for Confirmation, and that for the Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord, and then let them say whether the Church is less watchful for the purity of the life and doctrines of those who come to her, than the denominations around us are of their members."

Uncle Hallam spoke of the interest which old-fashioned people used to take in their servants. He said: "The higher the position of the master and mistress, and the greater

the number of their domestics, so much the greater is their responsibility toward God, for souls committed to their influence and care."

Nannette said: "It was beautiful in King Louis the Ninth, of France, to catechise his kitchen-boy, and to say, 'He hath a soul which was bought with Christ's precious blood, as well as mine.' But then he was one of the best of the French monarchs, and his royalty did not make him forget God."

"We will now resume our lesson on the Lord's Supper, if you please," said the bishop. "I am glad of all these intermediate conversations upon Baptism, and the proper instruction that the Church orders to fit the candidate for Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. You will recollect that the clergyman says to the sponsors of the newly baptized, 'Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the bishop, to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and is *sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose;*' and in the ex

hortation before that, the minister says that the child must learn '*all other things that a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health*,' and that '*he must be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and Christian life*,' after the example of our blessed Lord and Saviour, whom we are to strive to be like. Nobody who reads these two solemn and earnest charges that follow the baptism of an infant, can say that every safeguard from worldliness and sin is not placed around our little children. We can not have these tender darlings exposed to the evils of the kingdom of Satan; we must bring them as early as possible into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so train them in the Gospel truth, while they are young, that they will never run after error when they come to mature years. The command was positive to the Jews, 'to teach God's laws diligently to the children,' and as positive is the New Testament direction to Christian parents to 'train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

"Josephus says, there was in every Jewish village a person called the 'Instructor of Babes,' who taught the little children the law until they were ten years old, then they learned in the Talmud. At thirteen, they were brought to the house of God to be publicly examined, and, being approved, were called 'children of the precept'—that is, obliged to keep the law."

"It is a very precious thought that our Saviour was thus catechised in his childhood," said Mr. Asher. "It should make our young people the more eager to come to the public instruction in the Church."

"Our blessed Lord Jesus was but twelve years old, and yet pressed forward to obey the command, being eager to do his Father's will, and our children are to be brought to Confirmation when they are come to *competent age*, which is sometimes earlier and sometimes later. The discretion of the parents, and their observation of the child's fitness and disposition to serve God with all the heart, must decide this; and the spiritual pas-

tor and guide must be satisfied as to the suitable preparation for so solemn a renewal of the baptismal covenant."

Nannette said: "I love to think of the children of Israel studying the law, and the Mishna, and their daily prayers. It seems to bring us very close together, and nearer to our Lord Jesus in his childhood. We Christian children ought certainly to be as earnest to obey the Gospel as the little Jews were to learn and follow the law."

The bishop turned to "The Warning before the Communion." He said: "The Jewish festivals were proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet, some time before their observance. All solemn feasts had their previous days of preparation. The Paschal Lamb, the type of Christ, whose death we commemorate in the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, was chosen and kept four days to remind the Jews to prepare for the solemn Passover. Hezekiah sent out expresses to publish his intended Passover, and since we have come to such infrequent participation that our

minds and hearts are not so constantly set on holy things as they ought to be, we need the warning to search and examine our consciences that we come not lightly to so sacred a feast."

"In the early Church, there was no solemn assembly without the communion of the Lord's Supper, was there, grandpapa?"

"No, dear child; consequently they had not this exhortation; but our rubric says the minister 'shall always give the Warning before the Celebration, on some Sunday or holiday immediately preceding.' 'He shall read this exhortation following, or so much of it as in his discretion he may think convenient.'"

"The English book makes him read the whole—nothing is left to his discretion."

"How very full of devout earnestness this and the next warning are!" said Miss Bent. "I find them a real help to my preparation for the Lord's Supper."

"They are attributed to the same source whence the first exhortation in the Morning Prayer came," said the bishop.

"You mean Melancthon?"

"Yes; you will perceive a like peculiarity of language, as 'food and sustenance,' 'search and examine,' 'holy and clean,' 'way and means,' 'restitution and satisfaction,' 'counsel and advice.' These in the first; and in the second, 'called and bidden,' 'injury and wrong,' 'accepted and allowed.'"

"And the exhortation at the time of the Celebration must be his too, grandpapa; for there is the same lovely tone and thought through all."

"I think so, my child; but let us examine carefully the first warning, and see what we can gain for practical use, before we reach the dear All Saints' Day."

Mrs. Sands observed: "The clergyman says, 'Dearly beloved, I purpose on next ——, through God's assistance, to minister to all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed, the most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ."

"That is a most worthy beginning," said the bishop. "The minister who comes to

the altar with a deep sense of his own weakness and need of divine aid, will be sure to have the blessing of Almighty God."

Miss Bent said: "The salutation dearly beloved' always stirs my heart. It is so great a joy to know that he who is set over me in the Lord has really an affection for my soul; that every one of his parishioners is or ought to be to him a precious child—some nearer, of course, than others, as they obey and reverence our Lord Jesus, and him the ambassador of so dear a King; but all precious in the paternal sense, that takes in both the thoughtful and the thoughtless children."

"You are right, daughter; the true representative of the gentle Master, yearns with deep love after those whom he calls to the holy feast; and as the people hear the words, 'dearly beloved,' they should not only see the pastor's love, but the tender, compassionate, yearning heart of Jesus, that was not content until its blood was poured out upon the cross for our salvation. If they

think of this great heart, they must heed the call to 'the holy feast.'"

"If they are 'religiously and devoutly disposed,' they will surely seek the Lord Jesus at his table," said Uncle Hallam, "and will take real comfort in his holy sacrament, 'to be received by them in remembrance of his meritorious cross and passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the "kingdom of heaven."'"

Mr. Asher said: "In the Roman Church, the congregation are, generally, but spectators. If they receive once a year, it is thought sufficient. At other times, they only look on, while the priest alone communicates. But we must, ourselves, at every possible opportunity, take the sacred symbols, and so keep in perpetual remembrance that sacrifice once made upon the cross for our sins. No other propitiation than that made by our blessed Lord Jesus can avail us for the remission of our sins, and the salvation of our souls. 'Wherefore it is our duty to render

most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, for that he hath given his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy sacrament. It does seem most marvellous that our Lord Jesus should so provide for his unworthy children. What a weary probation were this life without his dear thought and care of us! How hungry and faint our souls would be if we did not frequently refresh and strengthen them by taking the holy food prepared for us by our loving Lord! Our spiritual life could not continue without this 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'"

"These words of the Holy Ghost are too little thought of by men," said the bishop. "If they received due reflection, who would dare to risk his soul from month to month without seeking this spiritual nourishment?"

"It is 'a divine and comfortable thing only 'to such as receive it worthily,' grandpapa," said Nannette.

"Yes, my child, and so 'dangerous to those who will presume to receive it unworthily' that the minister says, 'My duty is to exhort you, in the mean season, to consider the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof, and so to search and examine your own consciences, and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but so that ye may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy table.'"

Miss Bent said: "The plea that my Sunday scholars make for absenting themselves from the Supper of the Lord is, that they 'do not feel worthy to participate.' I can not make them understand that if they considered themselves worthy, it would be the surest unfitness, and that they must come with a deep sense of their own sinfulness, and with a desire to lead better and holier lives, through the help of our Lord Jesus, whose death for sinners they commemorate."

The bishop said: "The dignity of that holy mystery appalls the young disciple until he is taught that this sentence means that he should make a difference between this and our ordinary food; that he should 'discern in it the Lord's body,' and by faith feed upon that soul nourishment. We must not expect to comprehend it fully. It is a *mystery*."

"Do not mystery and sacrament mean the same thing?" said Miss Bent.

"They have been so used at times," replied the bishop. "Properly, 'sacrament' is the outward sign, and 'mystery' the inward signification, or hidden secret grace. Among the Greeks and Romans, mysteries were secret religious assemblies, which none but the initiated were permitted to attend. They were designed to interpret the mythological fables and sacred rites, the true meaning of which it was thought best to conceal from the people."

"You do not mean Christian rites, grandpapa?"

"No; they were in honor of Jupiter and

Bacchus, and Ceres and Iris, and other heathen deities. The 'mysteries' or 'miracles' of the middle ages were dramatic performances, which taught the doctrines of Christianity and represented the early miracles."

"It seems to me a profanity," said Miss Bent; "to represent the passion of Christ is so dreadful!"

"It is sad to think of such exhibitions as have taken place in many of the southern countries of Europe, as well as in Germany, and even in England," said the bishop.

Miss Bent spoke of Hone's account of some of these "miracle plays."

Mr. Asher said: "The people were so infatuated by these diversions, that the decrees of the popes against them were for a long time of little avail."

The bishop recalled his children to the subject that had suggested this episode.

"We are exhorted to spend the interval between the Warning and our approach to the Lord's table, in thinking how sublime a thing

it is to be made partakers of the body and blood of Jesus, and to be knit unto him by this blessed mystery, and we are to look diligently into our hearts, by the light of each commandment, to see wherein we have offended, and we are to confess our sins humbly to our Heavenly Father, and to beg for the cleansing from all guilt by the precious blood of Christ, and to put away all our own righteousness, which is but filthy rags, and to go before God with the merits of his dear Son, which form the 'wedding garment' provided for us."

"It was the Eastern custom for the master of the feast to get the garment ready without cost to his guests, was it not, grandpapa?"

"It was, my daughter; and so our blessed Lord gives to us the beautiful robe of his righteousness without money and without price. He has ransomed our souls and bod ies by his own most precious body and blood. So much is our guilt increased if we will not accept his gracious redemption."

Mrs. Sands said: "I think whoever carefully marks the language of this exhortation to come 'clean and holy in the marriage garment required by God in the Holy Scripture, and *be received as worthy* partakers, can not mistake the true meaning that God will behold in us the merits of his dear Son, and so will accept us."

"You are right," replied the bishop. "And that the people may have a preparation such as God's holy word directs, the clergyman is to tell them 'the way and means thereto,' which is, 'first to examine their lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever they shall perceive themselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail there own sinfulness, and to confess themselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life.'"

"Not to confess to the priest, grandpapa?"

"No, child; as I have often told my people, auricular confession was not established by the early Christian Church. In the ear-

liest ages, whoever was guilty of great sins, made a public acknowledgment of them and a profession of repentance before the assembled congregation. It was not until the fourth century that this public confession was changed to a secret one before the priest, and not until the fourth Lateran Council, in the year of our Lord twelve hundred and fifteen, that it was decreed as a compulsory duty, that 'every one of the faithful of both sexes, on coming to years of discretion, shall in private faithfully confess all their sins at least once a year to their own pastor, and fulfil to the best of their power the penance enjoined them, receiving reverently at least at Easter, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, unless, by the advice of their pastor, for some reasonable cause, they judge it proper to abstain from it for a time; otherwise, they are to be excluded from the Church while living, and when they die, to be deprived of Christian burial.' The compilers of the Prayer Book, after the Reformation, made it optional with the individual to go to his

pastor or not. To God, he *must confess his sins.* To the minister, he *may* open his grief. 'Let him come,' are the words."

"It is very sweet and dear to speak to our pastor of the things that concern our souls," said Miss Bent.

"Yes, my daughter, and a precious privilege to the pastor to know the devout and earnest desires of his people. He should be ever ready to receive all proper confidence, and to give suitable comfort and advice, but the Romish doctrine of a secret strict confessional is fraught with great danger both to priest and people, as past history abundantly shows, and I pray God that so pernicious a practice may never again be foisted upon his holy Church."

Mrs. Sands remarked: "I perceive that the English Prayer Book says, 'Let him come to me or some other discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to

the quieting of his conscience, and the avoid-ing of all scruple and doubtfulness.'"

The bishop said: "Our reviser, in view of the Romish abuse of the priestly absolution, thought fit to reject this wording, lest any soul rely upon a formal confession to the clergyman, and his pronouncing of absolution, as a sufficient preparation to the Holy Supper of our Lord, without a sincere repentance before God, and a full purpose of obedience to his sacred laws."

CHAPTER IV.

"YOU spoke of the Lateran Council. What do you mean by 'Lateran'?" asked Minnie.

"'Lateran' is a square in Rome, so called from an ancient Roman family," said the bishop. "The Lateran Palace became the property of the emperor, and Constantine the Great gave it to the popes, who occupied it for a thousand years. The Church of St. John of Lateran, connected with the palace, was built by Constantine."

"Did he not live in the latter part of the third and the first part of the fourth centuries?—and you have told us that the first pope was in the sixth century, grandpapa."

"I am glad to see you particular in these things, my child. The name 'pope' was used at first simply as the title 'father,' which is

its true signification. There was no decided assumption of supremacy by the Bishop of Rome until after the time of Gregory the Great.*

"All bishops had the title pope, and it is still in use in the East as in ancient times, and is not regarded by the Orientals as peculiar to the Bishop of Rome."

"It is a lovely name but for its perversion," said Miss Bent.

Nannette asked if the Universal Church is at all bound by the decrees of the Lateran Council.

The bishop said, "No. Those were very different from the *œcumenical* or *universal*

* "St. Gregory had very strong ideas respecting the authority which he conceived to belong to the successors of St. Peter, whilst his talents and holiness gave him an extensive influence over his contemporaries. Succeeding popes laid claim to more extended powers, especially Hadrian I. (A. D. 772—A. D. 795), who first advanced the doctrine that the whole Christian Church was subject to the See of Rome." There were slight papal aggressions previous to this, but nothing of a positive and fixed character.

councils, which assembled all the bishops of the Church. But we are wandering again from the more immediate subject of our esson."

"We were upon the preparation for a worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper," said Minnie.

Mr. Asher said: "We have reached the point of bewailing and confessing our sins to Almighty God."

"Then come the words, 'And if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbors, then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrong done by you to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others who have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand.'

"To the child of God, it is no humiliation to acknowledge when he has done wrong. A mean and petty nature alone can hesitate to

say, 'I have committed an error, and am sorry for it; I beg that you will forgive it.'"

"If we are unwilling to do this, the receiving of the Holy Communion doth nothing else but increase our condemnation," said Mr. Asher.

Uncle Hallam spoke of the special evils mentioned in the next sentence, as if to force us to a faithful searching of ourselves.

"Therefore, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, a hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crime, repent ye of your sins, or else come not to that holy table."

"The appeal is all the more solemn because it comes as from God to each individual conscience."

"We might deceive a priest, were he to examine us however faithfully. We can not hide one fault or sin from the All-Seeing Eye," said the bishop.

"But lest some tender souls be too severe upon themselves, and so fall into despair, or lest they have not right views of their guilt

and of the divine love, there is added to the exhortation, 'And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience, therefore, if there be any of you who, by these means—namely, self-examination and repentance—can not quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other minister of God's word, and open his grief, that he may receive such godly counsel and advice as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness."

"That seems so plain to me," said Nannette. "When I am in any trouble to understand just what I ought to do, it is such a relief to have a wise grandpapa to go to."

"I trust that all over whose spiritual needs I am set to watch may come to me with perfect confidence whenever it shall please them," said the bishop. "The prayers and advice and judgment and learning of the man of God are to be esteemed as precious

privileges to the congregation. Our blessed Lord and Saviour has appointed his ministers to direct and aid the people in their efforts after eternal life. The Churchly way of seeking this help at their own option makes the blessing all the sweeter."

Mrs. Sands spoke of the next exhortation in the Communion Office, to be used "in case the clergyman shall see the people negligent to come" to the Holy Supper.

"Christians get into a very sad way of neglecting their duty," said Mr. Asher.

"The Church has been at fault in not providing frequent opportunities, and, as a consequence, a monthly participation has seemed to many of the congregation all-sufficient; but, thank God! we are returning to a more primitive usage."

"This second exhortation is a very impressive one," said Uncle Hallam. "I do not see how any can withstand such an appeal."

Miss Bent read the first paragraph: "Dearly beloved brethren, on —— I intend, by God's grace, to celebrate the Lord's Supper,

unto which, in God's behalf, I bid you all who are here present, and beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that ye will not refuse to come thereto, being so lovingly called and bidden by God himself."

"It seems like the voice of our Lord Jesus, saying, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life,'" said the bishop.

Mr. Asher quoted: "Surely, it will be a huge reproach to us, if it appear that Satan and his 'complices, with a touch on the shoulder, or the slightest beckon, can oblige us to a theatre or looser bacchanal, and yet all the entreaties of God and his ministers can scarce obtain our company at this heavenly feast."

"The Church now condescends to arguments," said the bishop. "It is after God's gracious manner with his children, 'Come now, let us reason together.'"

Nannette read: "'You know how grievous and unkind a thing it is, when a man hath prepared a rich feast, decked his table with all kinds of provision, so that there lacketh

nothing but the guests to sit down; and yet they who are called without any cause most unthankfully refuse to come.'

"It is like the words of our Lord Jesus in the parable of the marriage-feast," said Nannette.

"Yes," replied the bishop; "and I wish you to observe the first five verses of the ninth chapter of Proverbs:

"'Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

"'She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

"'She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

"'Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

"'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

"'Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.'"

"How emblematic it seems of the Holy

Supper of our Lord!" said Miss Bent; "but I do not quite comprehend the third verse."

The bishop said: "It is the custom in some of the Oriental countries to send out a number of women to invite people to a banquet. A traveller in Egypt mentions these as 'going about with black vails, and making a strange and clamorous noise, as they call the guests together.'"

"One needs to know many things in order to understand the Scriptures in their full beauty," said Miss Bent.

"'The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein,' so far as the plan of salvation is concerned," said the bishop. "Every earnest soul that comes to the Holy Book, seeking to know the will of his Heavenly Father, can not fail to find out that will, so that he can do it if he pleases; but there are allusions to the manners and customs of the East, and there are historical portions and points of Christian doctrine that need explanation by persons who make the sacred Scriptures their life-study."

"The Church is a witness and keeper of Holy Writ, is she not?" asked Mrs. Sands.

"That is what she is called in the Twentieth Article of Religion," returned the bishop; "and, as such, she 'is not to ordain or decree any thing that is contrary to God's word, or expound one place of Scripture so that it be repugnant to another.

"She puts forth no doctrine that can not be proved by the Bible. She challenges the whole world to find in the Prayer Book any thing that is contrary to Scripture teaching.'"

"What *individual* members say must not always be called the doctrine of the Church," said Mr. Asher. "If it does not accord with the teachings of the Bible and the Prayer Book, we may know that it has not substantial grounds."

Uncle Hallam said, "Let us return to the great feast to which we are pressed to be present. After speaking of the bountiful provision made, and the indifference of those who are invited, the minister says,

"'Which of you in such a case would not

be moved? Who would not think a great injury and wrong done unto him? Wherefore, most dearly beloved in Christ, take ye good heed lest ye, withdrawing yourselves from this Holy Supper, provoke God's indignation against you.'"

"It would be a great impertinence for a subject to refuse the call to a king's feast, would it not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, indeed; and thought deserving of punishment. How much worse, then, for us, who profess to be the soldiers of Christ, and his obedient servants, to slight his gracious invitations, and thus break our vows of allegiance!"

"Is it not wonderful that God condescends to eat with us sinners?" said Mrs. Sands. "I can not understand the Christian soul that does not run to this precious feast."

"Will not God's anger be greater if we stay away, without any effort to prepare ourselves, than if we come with all our sins upon us?" asked Miss Bent.

"We must eat and drink as sinners, if we

partake at all," replied the bishop; "but it must be as repentant sinners who intend to try, by God's help, to lead a new life. The indignation of our Heavenly Father is for such as carelessly slight his divine goodness, and think but lightly of the benefits of this Holy Supper. No one can refuse to participate if he has right views of the great help it is to his spiritual life."

"Worldly business will not excuse us," said Mrs. Sands, looking at the next sentence in the exhortation.

"No," replied the bishop. "It is an easy matter for a man to say, 'I will not communicate, because I am otherwise hindered by worldly business;' but such excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God."

Nannette read: "'If any man say, I am a grievous sinner and, therefore, am afraid to come, wherefore, then, do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse yourselves, and say ye are not ready? Consider

with yourselves how little such feigned excuses will avail before God.'"

"It was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," said Nannette, with thoughtful reverence.

"Remember this, my dear children: the humble Christian always draws near to the Altar of God with the deep sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness. You will see this spirit of self-abasement and humility throughout the Communion Service. Priest and people must feel and acknowledge it. It is the disposition that should draw us to Jesus, rather than drive us from him. To whom else shall we go for eternal life?"

Mr. Asher said: "There was some wholesome discipline in the primitive Church with egard to such Christians as came to the sermon and went out before Communion. They were excommunicated."

"It would seem a very severe measure in our day," replied the bishop.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and

if the children of God refuse this divine bidding, they risk being cast out from that Blessed Supper in the heavenly kingdom, when all the faithful shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the Lord Jesus himself, in his glorious majesty, shall eat and drink with his Spouse, the Redeemed Church."

Nannette read: "'Those who refused the feast in the Gospel, because they had bought a farm or would try their yokes of oxen or because they were married, were not so excused, but were counted unworthy of the heavenly feast.'"

"These are the precious words of our Lord Jesus, who speaks of the Master of the feast, as 'very wroth' with those who had despised his invitation," said the bishop.

"We must beware how we slight the offer of his grace, lest, when we call, he refuse; for the hour will come when every human soul will look to Jesus as the only refuge from misery and everlasting death."

"It is with this knowledge that eternity is

near, and that the commands of God are implicit, and must be obeyed if we would escape condemnation, that the ambassador pleads with the congregation:

"'Wherefore, according to mine office, I bid you, in the name of God; I call you in Christ's behalf; I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this Holy Communion.'"

"The English book," says Mrs. Sands, "begins this paragraph with the decision of the minister: 'I, for my part, shall be ready.'"

"It is for the clergy to provide this Holy Supper," said the bishop. "They were appointed by our Lord Jesus to dispense it in his name to his children. They are stewards of God's household and mysteries, and if the children do not find the table spread, the steward will be held accountable; but if it be always ready and the announcement duly made, then the sin lies at the door of every soul that refuses to eat and drink of the feast."

Mr. Asher asked: "May not this declara-

tion of the priest also mean that he will prepare his own soul for this heavenly service, whatever those may venture who are committed to his charge?"

"It is a decision which every clergyman should make," said the bishop.

"'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

"And this earnest, devout example of the minister may have much to do with the action of the people. They will be more or less influenced by their leader.

"The priest then goes on to speak of the great price paid for us, and the gratitude due our gracious Redeemer:

"'And as the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up his soul, by death upon the cross, for your salvation, so it is your duty to receive the Communion, in remembrance of the sacrifice of his death, as he himself hath commanded.'"

"We could not possibly refuse the dying command of an earthly father, could we, grandpapa?"

"It would be a strange, hard heart that could fail to obey," said the bishop.

"The latter part of this exhortation is still an earnest pleading from the minister as to the Christian's duty:

"'Which if ye shall neglect to do, consider with yourselves how great is your ingratitude to God, and how sore a punishment hangeth over your heads for the same, when ye wilfully abstain from the Lord's Table and separate from your brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food.'"

"The English book has, 'how great injury ye do to God,'" said Mrs. Sands.

"It simply means that we wrong God of his due, and that we hinder the progress of his kingdom, by our unfaithfulness," said the bishop; "but our revisers thought best to change that clause, since 'we can not properly be said to injure God.'

"There are many mothers of young children, and many sick, who can not often avail themselves of the Holy Supper in the house of God; it is therefore the words '*wilfully*

abstain' are used. Our dear Lord sees how sincere is the longing of many a soul that is obliged to stay away. He accepts from such the desire, as a sweet and ready obedience."

"It is a sin to separate ourselves from our brethren in this Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord when we can be with them," said Mr. Asher.

"Yes," replied the bishop; "and to the true child of God, one of the blessed delights of this Holy Sacrament is the binding of soul to soul in a perfect brotherhood in Christ Jesus our Lord. Who can kneel at the Altar of Divine Love, and not feel an overflowing of heavenly charity from his own heart toward all mankind?"

"I can appreciate this social family bond," said Miss Bent. "It is always happier for me when the hour of Communion is such that all the members can be present, and I choose it for myself rather than the early time when the few gather together."

Uncle Hallam said: "The clergyman assures the negligent congregation that, if they

earnestly consider what the exhortation has put before them, they will, by God's grace, return to a better mind, for the obtaining whereof we shall not cease to make our humble petition unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father."

"There is such gentleness in the Church's rebukes," said Miss Bent. "She is indeed a tender mother, and worthy so gracious a 'Husband,' as our dear Lord is pleased to call himself. This thought of 'our Heavenly *Father*,' in connection with 'Almighty God,' brings us to a sweet trust and confidence, even though our sins might provoke punishment. We know how a father pities his children and weighs all their infirmities, and if we make humble petitions to this Heavenly Father for forgiveness, he will surely be as ready to receive and pardon as an earthly parent would be."

"Then the heart of Jesus yearns so after us," said the bishop. "'How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.'

"He has done all that he can do for our salvation; he has given up his precious body upon the cross, and poured out his cleansing blood for us; and if we fail to apply his merits to our own souls by a participation in this Holy Sacrament, the penalty of our neglect and disobedience must surely await us.

"Those Israelites who made light of Hezekiah's call to the Passover, laughing the messengers to scorn and mocking them, were given into the hands of the heathen and carried into a sorrowful captivity, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his Covenant, and all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them."

"It is a great happiness to know that the clergyman is praying for us," said Miss Bent. "Those who live as near to God's altar as his ambassadors ought to do, seem to have blessed access to our Heavenly Father."

"Do not forget, dear child, that 'God is nigh unto all who call upon him faithfully,'" said the bishop.

"It is indeed precious to feel that the minister bears his people before God, in his earnest petitions, and it is also very sacred and dear to his heart to know that his people are never forgetful of him when they kneel to pray. Let us remember this always, and ask the divine love and blessing upon each other."

CHAPTER V.

NOT only in the presence of others did the good bishop give holy lessons to his candidates for confirmation.

He knew well the necessity for close personal instruction. The word spoken privately, soul to soul, was often effectual to win the confidence of the young and timid, who could not so readily reveal their doubts and fears before many witnesses.

Not that they were ashamed to confess Christ before the world, but there is in the truly devout and earnest soul a certain shrinking from the general scrutiny of its secret and sacred emotions. The ambassador of God who is to present us to his Master, is the only one who has the right to search our spirit, and satisfy himself as to our credentials. If he finds these such as the Great King demands, it is enough.

"Cousin Minnie" had many a quiet walk, and other opportunities for private conversations on the one theme that occupied her mind and heart.

"These happy times with your grandfather are never to be forgotten," she said to Nannette, one day, after a long stroll through the city. "It is so easy to talk to him, and he makes me understand so well what it is that I am about to promise for myself, and how pleasant my life must be if I walk ever in the light of God."

They had to take the hours devoted to visits to the poor, as the bishop had little out-of-door exercise excepting these charitable rounds.

This was in itself a beautiful illustration of "pure religion and undefiled," which is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world."

"A merely emotional piety will not be accepted before God and the Father," the bishop said to his children. "The love that is

within the soul, if it is of the right kind, must show itself in works of mercy to all the suffering, who in this world represent to us our blessed Lord Jesus."

Nannette and Minnie felt that they could never settle down to an easy, contemplative Christianity. "*Faith and works*," was the constant utterance of the bishop; "*Faith and works*" the deep impression upon the young hearts that were ready to give true service for the dear Lord.

How sweet and precious and unreserved is the early consecration of ourselves to the Great Father! Oh! the blessedness of placing upon his altar all the best things of our youth! God so loves this fresh morning sacrifice. Let the little children come unto him and stay with him. They need never go away from his guardianship. They are all the more sure to remain faithful, if they seek God and things divine, before the world and its vanities corrupt them.

Nannette and Minnie were speaking about this as the twilight drew on, and they stood

together in the bay-window in the bishop's study.

Nannette said: "I am so glad that I have not been brought up to a worldly and fashionable life, but that dear grandpapa has given me a quiet training, so that things sacred and holy seem the things that belong to me."

"Oh! yes," said Minnie, "it must be very difficult to turn about when one has cared for nothing but gayeties. Your grandfather was telling me this afternoon that if we begin to serve God in our childhood, he seems to give us great power to resist evil, and that if we are only true to our Heavenly Father, he will never permit us to be overcome by a temptation."

"*If we are true to him*," said Nannette; "we will try to be that. It is a comfort to think that the younger and more feeble we are, the more tender and watchful over us he will be. Just like a loving earthly parent who sees that little child needs him at every step."

Mrs. Sands called the young girls to tea. The bishop and Uncle Hallam were discussing the topics of the day, before the evening should bring them to higher subjects. They came gladly to the family meal.

"The social gathering around the home table is always a delightful episode," said the bishop. "What would the day be without these breaks in the general routine?"

Uncle Hallam spoke of God's goodness in giving to us the pleasures of the palate, and in making the necessities of life prove real enjoyments.

Nannette asked, "Are not some nations of the earth brutish in their appetites, so that what was designed as a simple pleasure becomes to them a means of discomfort and injury?"

"It is only savages who gorge themselves with food," replied her grandfather. "Civilization and Christianity ought to make us temperate in meats and drinks."

Mrs. Sands brought forth a little old-fashioned teacup, that had been handed down

from a hundred and fifty years ago. "This does not look as if one could be very intemperate in drink," she said.

Minnie took it to examine. It would hold no more than a thimbleful.

"You must remember," said the bishop, "that tea at the time when these tiny cups were in use was very costly, and was only procured by the wealthy as a great luxury. That cup came from our mother country. We have not had the precious beverage so long."

"I can not see how people contrived to live without it," said Mrs. Sands, who had an especial partiality for the exhilarating cup.

"They used the '*Liberty Tea*,'" said Uucle Hallam.

"What is that?" asked Minnie.

"It was made from the four-leaved '*Loose Strife*,' and was used by the Americans during the struggle with Great Britain, while the tax laid upon tea prevented its coming into general use."

"I can not think it would be a very good

substitute," said Mrs. Sands. "I want my regular *bona-fide* '*Congou.*'"

"You are right to despise counterfeits," said the bishop. "I quite agree with you that nothing can be equal to the real cup."

The conversation then changed to matters of nearer home interest, and presently the family assembled in the drawing-room, there to await the arrival of Miss Bent and Mr. Asher, who were not slow to appear.

"We have reached a very sacred and solemn part of our Communion Office," said the bishop. "In the early Greek Church, St. Chrysostom tells us, 'when the communicants were conveniently placed, the priest, standing in a conspicuous station, stretched forth his hand, and lifted his voice in the midst of profound silence, inviting the worthy and forbidding the unworthy to approach the holy feast.' So, the priest of God in our day says, 'Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye who mind to come to the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how St. Paul exhorteth all

persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.'"

"Is this for fear that the people may have come without preparation?" asked Nannette.

"Yes, dear child, we are so apt to let worldly things rule us, and to come into the immediate presence of God without shaking off the things of earth; so there is our long blessed service before we reach the altar, and we have this gracious interval given us to confess our sins and ask for pardon and peace."

Miss Bent read: "'For as the benefit is great, if with a true, penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament, so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily.'"

"This is a most serious moment for every soul," said the bishop. "Each one knows with what spirit he kneels at this sacred feast. Who would dare to try and deceive the great, omniscient God?"

Mrs. Sands quoted from the English book

the words that our revisers omitted: "'For then—that is, if we come with penitence and faith—"we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." And if we receive unworthily, "for then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour. We eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's Body; we kindle God's wrath against us, we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death."'"

"To come carelessly," said the bishop, "is the same as 'counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing,' and thus we 'crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,' just as the guilty murderers and mockers did in the olden time. Only we have the greater sin, because we profess to be his friends and followers."

"Does God show his wrath against sinners by visible judgments in this life?" asked Miss Bent.

"We have the Scripture warrant for saying that he sometimes does," replied the bishop. "And how much better for us if our punishment comes in season to lead us to repentance and to save us from endless misery!"

"It is for this reason," said Mr. Asher, "that we are called upon. 'Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; repent ye truly for your sins past; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men: so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries.'"

"How searching it is!" said Miss Bent. "Who can say that the Church demands little of her children?"

"Only those who are unfamiliar with our Prayer Book," said Mr. Asher. "Few dissenters know the wondrous value of what is bound up in the three offices, 'Baptism, 'Confirmation,' and 'the Supper of the Lord, and in our 'Church Catechism'—to say noth

ing of the rare treasures scattered throughout the Liturgy."

"It makes me tremble to read what is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper," said Minnie.

"My precious child," said the bishop, "it is not meant to frighten timid souls; it is but to restrain the rash and presumptuous. The love of Jesus shines throughout this beautiful exhortation, and his humble children will see it, and will fly to meet his outstretched mercy. How can we doubt his love, especially in this feast that so commemorates it?—his dying love! He spared not his life for us. It is for this that the priest continues, 'And, above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; that he might exalt us to everlasting life.'"

Mr. Asher said: "I suppose, in the very act or taking the Bread and the Wine, our principal emotion should be earnest gratitude and thanksgiving, that by the death of our Lord Jesus, eternal life is made possible to us sinners."

"Yes," replied the bishop; "our repentance for our sins has preceded our approach to the altar, and our souls should then make the feast indeed a '*Eucharist.*'"

Mrs. Sands said: "I have been dwelling upon the 'darkness and shadow of death,' in which this wretched world lay before the coming of Jesus."

"The words give a vivid picture of the terrors of a wicked world without a Saviour," said the bishop. "Not only no light, but amid all gloom the constant shadow of that dreadful reality from which the natural man must always shrink."

"It seems singular that Christians should ever forget the sacrifice of the Lord's death, which makes even the grave light to us," said Miss Bent.

Mrs. Sands read: "'And to the end that we

should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained for us, he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort—to him, therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give, as we are most bounden, continual thanks, submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life.'"

The bishop remarked: "Only he who took upon himself our human nature, and understands and appreciates all its needs, could have provided so sure and blessed a comfort for us as these holy mysteries, which bring us into such perfect union and communion with each other and with himself. The frequent recurrence of this sacred commemoration keeps us very near to the cross of our dear Lord

and Saviour; and not only this, but our soul and our body are nourished and preserved by this spiritual food, unto everlasting life. What a miracle of God's love and grace, that common things are made to convey to us such infinite blessing! The submission and service of our whole life is but small return for such wondrous good."

Nannette said: "This exhortation belongs to the more immediate service of the Lord's Supper, does it not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, daughter; it begins what is called the 'Pre-Communion'—what has gone before is the Ante-Communion Service, and is read every Lord's day and every holy day, whether the sacred feast is spread or not."

"You mean to the end of the prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church militant," said Nannette.

"Yes."

"But the rubric before the short exhortation seems to imply that the longer one is addressed to the whole congregation," said Mrs. Sands.

"It used to be the case," said the bishop, "but now the non-communicants retire either before or during the reading, and then when the Church is still, and only the obedient children of God remain, the priest is directed to make to them this close personal appeal:

"'Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.'"

Uncle Hallam referred to the primitive custom of getting nearer to the altar at this summons of the priest. He said: "It is done in some of our churches now, the communicants pressing forward to the front pews, that they may be the more ready to go up to the chancel 'in order,' as is directed in the 'Constitutions of the Holy Apostles': '*Coming in order, with reverence and holy fear.*'"

"It saves much confusion to have such a regulation," said Mrs. Sands.

The bishop directed the attention of his children to the solemn wording of the appeal. "'*Truly* and *earnestly*' admit of no careless interpretation," he said. "If any soul is insincere and without real repentance before God, how dreadful the consequences! Then 'love and charity' for our neighbors comprehend so much of tender-heartedness, and forbearance, and forgiveness; such putting away of all anger, and hatred, and malice, and such hiding of the faults of others, as few rigidly observe. Oh! to be able to follow the letter and the spirit of this blessed Communion exhortation!"

"Grandpapa," said Nannette, "is it not possible, at the time of communion, to be very sincere and earnest in our repentance, and full of good resolutions to lead a new life, and follow God's commandments, and walk in his holy ways, and afterward may we not find ourselves very weak, and easily led astray?"

"I think, daughter, that all earnest resolutions made at the altar of our dying Lord and Saviour, receive strength through the holy sacrament of his precious Body and Blood; and *if we are watchful and prayerful*, and try to keep always in the shadow of the cross, in our trials and our pleasures, and in all our every-day life, our weakness will stay itself upon God, and our temptations will not be difficult to resist. We are to draw near to the holy supper 'with faith,' you remember—faith in the mercy of Him who knows all our infirmities, and will graciously heal them."

Miss Bent said: "This General Confession is ordered to be made by the priest and all those who are minded to receive the Holy Communion, humbly kneeling."

The bishop remarked: "The priest kneels here, and in the collect before the act of consecration, and when receiving the elements. Elsewhere in this Communion Office, he is to stand. It is the attitude which the priest observed in the service of the temple when the legal sacrifices were offered, and it is

appropriate now that our priest offers up the incense of prayers, praises, and alms; the oblation of ourselves, our souls and bodies; and the *memorial* of the sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

"This confession seems to bear the same stamp as that in our morning and evening service," said Mrs. Sands. "Is it also attributed to Melancthon, and to Hermann's Liturgy?"

"Yes," replied the bishop. "You will trace the German idiom. The 'golden-mouthed,' Chrysostom says that 'All the communicants were wont to join in the same general prayer for mercy;' and we can see the beautiful propriety of acknowledging in each other's presence, before God, our sins and iniquities."

CHAPTER VI.

"WE call upon God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," said Uncle Hallam. "It is a sort of earnest that he who gave for us his only-begotten Son, will freely give us all things else; and he is our Maker, and will surely be pitiful to the work of his own hands; and though our Judge, he has redeemed us from death by the precious blood of Jesus, so that even when we think of the majesty of this first sentence, there is comfort in it still."

"'We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us,'" read Nannette. "Is God provoked?" she asked.

"Not as men are provoked," replied her

grandfather. "We think of an angry and turbulent spirit when we apply that word to ourselves; but we must remember that God is patient and long-suffering with his rebellious children, and that he strives day and night with them, until they grieve him to depart, and leave them to the evil that they choose. 'Wrath and indignation' are words that we can understand, but they ought never to convey to us the thought of an unrighteous anger. God does hate sin; but the sinner he loves, and would save to the uttermost if we would let him.

"How hard a heart that must be, that is not bowed at this solemn moment," said the bishop. "The words are full of the deepest anguish for sin. 'We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable.'"

"How it brings to me the 'pilgrim,' weary of his heavy load," said Miss Bent.

The bishop resumed: "The penitent sinner feels every transgression as a great weight.

He knows what dreadful consequences one act of disobedience brought to our world, and he can never look lightly upon sin. He cries out at the remembrance of his own guilt. 'Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'"

Miss Bent said: "I recollect reading about one 'Eurynous,' who died and was buried at Nicopolis, and was afterwards taken up alive, and led a much more holy life than he had done before."

"It is an apt illustration of the Christian who dies unto sin, but is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," said Uncle Hallam.

"We ask for mercy in the very words of King David," said the bishop. "In the fifty-seventh, and the one hundred and twenty third Psalms you will find this expression."

"God is not displeased at our importunity, is he?" said Miss Bent. "Does it come under the head of 'vain repetition,' when we beg earnestly, over and over again, to him for pardon for sin, and release from it?"

"Oh no, my child," said the bishop. "The earnest pleading shows that the soul feels its need of a Saviour, and such heartfelt petitions are dear to our Heavenly Father."

Uncle Hallam quoted the sweet lines from Faber:

"'God loves to be longed for, he loves to be sought,
For he sought us himself with such longing and love;
He died for desire of us, marvellous thought!
And he yearns for us now to be with him above.

"'Then wish more for God, burn more with desire,
Covet more the dear sight of his marvellous face;
Pray louder, pray long, for the sweet gift of fire
To come down on thy heart with its whirlwind of grace.'"

"I have spoken of the Absolution, when we were upon the Morning and Evening Prayer," said the bishop. "I think that it is plain to you, my children, that only in the name of

God, and upon the conditions of your hearty repentance and true faith, is the ambassador of Christ to assure you of the forgiveness of your sins; and your own souls will tell you whether the blessed word of pardon belongs to you."

"Oh yes, we understand that fully," said Nannette. "We could not think the priestly Absolution meant for us, while we are planning and doing wicked acts."

"That sort of superstition can only belong to the most ignorant and ill-taught," said Miss Bent.

"I think you said that this shorter Absolution was transferred from the Liturgy of Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne, to the English Liturgy, did you not?"

"Yes, daughter, we find it in the 'Uses' of Sarum and Hereford; but long before either Germany or England had it, the Greeks and the Latins were accustomed to it in their churches, so that it bears the sanction of age."

"What do you mean by 'Uses,' grandpapa."

"Forms put forth by different bishops, for certain localities. At the time of the Reformation, there were five of these 'Uses' in England. Out of these, and Hermann's, and primitive Liturgies, one Liturgy was compiled for the whole country; and this, thank God! has come to us in its perfection. It seems to me that there is nothing lacking in our Prayer Book."

Miss Bent said: "The words of Scripture that follow the Absolution in the Communion Office, are full of blessing and assurance. Sometimes it seems almost impossible that God can look with favor upon me; I feel myself to be so weak and sinful; and the first real comfort is in the call of Jesus, 'Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'"

"They are well called 'comfortable words.'"

"And they are spoken to all who truly come to Christ our Saviour," said the bishop. "You are still upon your knees, all you of the congregation; the priest, as the messenger of God, has pronounced your pardon for all past

sin, and has asked for your strength and confirmation in all goodness, and for your everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,—and you have said 'Amen,' or 'So may it be, O Lord'; but lest you doubt the word spoken by man, the promise of God himself is vouchsafed you in the very phrase of Scripture."

Uncle Hallam said: "Dean Comber speaks of this 'persuasion of God's mercy as our shield of faith, without which we should not come to this Christian sacrifice.' He says that the Germans allowed none who had lost their shield to come to their sacrifices; and he compares fears and misgiving thoughts, doubts and despair, to this loss, which rendered one unworthy a blessing."

"Is not the word 'travail' in the first sentence, the same as labor, in the ancient English?" asked Mrs. Sands.

"Yes," replied the bishop. "It means those who labor with great pains and distresses, and cry out for relief; and our Lord Jesus delivers them from the burden of guilt,

and nails it to his cross, and refreshes them with his grace and love."

Nannette read the next sentence; "'So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"How new and sweet this gospel always sounds," said the bishop. "It can never be exhausted, preach and preach as we may. The fulness is divine."

"Next comes the witness of the Apostles," said Uncle Hallam. "'Hear also what St. Paul saith. This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

"Did not St. Paul call himself 'the chief of sinners?'" asked Minnie.

"Yes," replied the bishop. "And he had felt the miraculous power of that Jesus whom he had once persecuted. He could well speak to us of this great and merciful Saviour."

"And St. John, also," said Uncle Hallam, "tells us of Jesus Christ the righteous, who is our Advocate with the Father, and is the Propitiation for our sins. St. John was that 'beloved Disciple' who could best understand the mediation of such a 'friend of sinners.' If we are afraid because we have so often broken the divine laws, Jesus the sinless will plead our cause for us; and he will surely prevail with God, for has he not offered himself to pay all our debts? Therefore, if we are truly sorry for our sins, and intend to lead a new and holy life, we may put aside all thought of justice, and remember only God's love and mercy toward us, through Christ Jesus our Saviour; and we may be ready to respond to the priestly exhortation, 'Lift up your hearts.' 'We lift them up unto the Lord.'"

"'*Sursum corda*,' we call that versicle, do we not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, daughter, after the Latin version. I wish you and Minnie to observe especially this part of the Communion Office—all indeed

of the Prefaces, and the '*Trisagium*' or '*Ter sanctus.*' There is such holy joy in them—such exaltation as should be on the lips and in the heart of every one who comes to the Eucharistic feast."

Uncle Hallam said: "It is wonderful how these forms have come down to us from remotest antiquity. There is no primitive Liturgy that has not almost the very words that we are now considering."

The bishop said: "In the Liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom, it is 'Let us lift up our minds and hearts'; and in the Apostolical Constitutions are the very words that we now use, 'Lift up your hearts.'"

"You have spoken several times of the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' grandpapa, what are they?"

"A collection of ecclesiastical laws and regulations, purporting to be the work of the holy Apostles. Whether genuine or not, there are many ancient things contained in them that are entitled to our respect."

"The traditions of the Church that are not

repugnant to the word of God, ought to be very dear to her children," said Uncle Hallam. "It is a great happiness to me to be using the same words that were in the mouths of such Christians as St. Clement, St. Ambrose, and St. Chrysostom, and a host of ancient worthies."

The bishop then read from the "Golden Mouthed": "'Take heed ye that in the time of the dreadful mysteries are thinking or talking of vanity. O man, what dost thou! Hast thou not promised the priest who said, "lift up your mind and heart," and thou didst reply, "we lift them up"?'"

"Our hearts must be where our treasure is," said Miss Bent.

Nannette asked: "Is it right to have the Holy Communion in seasons of deep humiliation?"

The bishop replied: "The primitive Christians forbore to participate in so joyous a feast at such seasons. The Apostles did eat the meat with gladness, and it was always accompanied with psalms, and hymns, and

spiritual songs. When Aaron was in trouble for the loss of his sons, he would not eat of the type of this sacrament, lest he should displease God by eating in his grief."

"The lifting up our hearts," said Uncle Hallam, "means not only to cast off all depressing thoughts of our sinfulness, but we are to be occupied with the glories of our redemption. We are to rise above the world, and to dwell for the time being with God, and with the holy angels."

"The priest then says: 'Let us give thanks unto our Lord God;' and the people respond, 'It is meet and right so to do.' We all know," said the bishop, "that God alone enables us to lift up our hearts, and that it is fitting that we return thanks to him for so great a joy. Then shall the priest turn to the Lord's Table and say, for himself and the congregation, 'It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.'"

Nannette read the rubric: "'Here shall follow the Proper Preface, according to the time, if there be any especially appointed;' That means for the holy days—Christmas, and Easter, and Ascension, and Whit-Sunday, and the Feast of the Trinity," she said.

"The observance of daily and weekly Communion gradually falling off, the people were careful to come at the time of the most joyous festivals of the Church, and in addition to the ordinary thanksgiving, there is especial mention made of the peculiar mercy commemorated on these great feast days. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, 'Who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin.' You see how the pure doctrines of the Creed are cared for and preserved in this Preface, as in all the others."

Minnie read the one for Easter: "'But chiefly are we bound to praise thee for the

glorious Resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: for he is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by his death has destroyed death, and, by his rising to life again 'hath restored to us everlasting life.'"

Nannette read for Ascension Day, "'Through thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who, after his most glorious Resurrection, manifestly appeared to all his Apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven, to prepare a place for us; that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory.'"

"How it takes in every joy," said the bishop; "the bodily going up, in the sight of his chosen ones,—the reason for his departure, that he might 'prepare a place for us,'—and the prospect of our bright future with him in glory."

"We are to say these Prefaces for seven days after the feast. Why is that?" asked Minnie.

"We imitate the Jews, who, by God's ap-

pointment, kept their greater festivals, some for seven days, and the Feast of the Tabernacles eight days. It seems proper that as Christians we should go beyond these types and shadows."

"Upon Whit-Sunday we have but six days after," said Minnie.

"That is because the next Lord's day is Trinity Sunday," said the bishop, "and has a preface peculiar to itself."

Nannette read: "'Through Jesus Christ our Lord; according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven, with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations; whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son, Jesus Christ.'"

"Did not St. Paul preach the gospel in Great Britain, grandpapa?"

"Yes, daughter; and through Great Britain, we have received the everlasting light and true knowledge. There is in this Preface a sweet recognition of missionary zeal and effort."

"The Trinity Preface is short, but very full," said Uncle Hallam, reading aloud,—

"'Who art one God, one Lord; not only one Person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality.'"

"These Prefaces are very ancient," said the bishop. "The Latin Church has ten, the last added in 1095, in honor of the blessed Virgin."

"We retain only the five which concern the principal acts of Christ, and we add to each of them the 'primitive and triumphant hymn,' which we find in the fourth chapter of the Revelation of St. John, and in all the an-

cient Liturgies, as well as the Apostolic Constitutions. The 'Holy, holy, holy' is an Ascription to each person in the blessed Trinity, since Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are concurred in our redemption."

"There seems a diversity of practice in repeating this Ascription," said Uncle Hallam. "Some begin with the priest at 'Therefore,' and some leave it to him alone until they come to the word 'Holy.'"

"The rubric is plain in our own, as well as in the English book," said the bishop.

"You mean that we all say it from the beginning?" asked Nannette.

"Yes, daughter, 'say or sing,' in the English book."

"I notice a substitute for the Trinity Preface, the words 'Holy Father' being retained in the introductory address," said Mrs. Sands.

"In the American version we have one. It is not in the English book," said the bishop.

Nannette read: "'For the precious death and merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our

Lord, and for the sending to us of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; who are one with thee in thy Eternal Godhead.'"

"The first is generally used," said the bishop. "With these blessed Prefaces, and the heavenly Ascription to the glorious Trinity, I think our lesson for to-night must close. It is very delightful to look over this service with you, my dear children. We all seem to be brought nearer and nearer to each other, as we contemplate the dear Lord, who sanctifies the ties of human love. We can not forget how our blessed Saviour gave up his life to make us one with him in the eternal home. May he fit us for a closer communion, when we shall dwell together in heaven!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE little party assembled on the next evening with peculiar emotions.

The bishop said: "It seems almost as if we had come to the Eucharistic feast, so dear and solemn are the words that are to occupy our thoughts to-night; but before we consider the form of administering the sacred elements, Nannette will please read the rubric."

"'Then shall the Priest first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in like manner (if any present), and, after that, to the People also in order, into their hands, all devoutly kneeling.'"

"There are several points in this rubric, that I wish to bring to your notice, as they

are of much importance in preventing false ideas of the blessed sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ," said the bishop. "Our priests are not permitted *solitary masses*, as is the case with the Romanists; there must be others to receive with the officiating clergyman. It has been always the custom for the clergy to communicate within the chancel, before delivering the sacrament to the people, and 'this is the only difference between ecclesiastical and lay communion, and not, as the Papists pretend, in the reception of both kinds by the clergy, and the denial of the cup to the laity.'"

"Then there is the direction to deliver the elements 'into the hands' of the people," said Miss Bent.

"That is because the Papists, in the corrupt ages of the Church, substituted a wafer for bread, and put it into the mouth of the communicant, 'lest any particle of the Body of Christ should be lost or wasted.' Their belief in transubstantiation brought about the withholding the cup entirely from the

laity, for fear 'that the Blood should be spilt. Thus we see how one error leads to another, until all the precious truths of the gospel are perverted by men."

"The posture of kneeling seems the only fitting one while we receive," said Uncle Hallam. "We are taking this feast as from the hand of God—the priest representing the great Master, and it is but proper that we humbly and reverently kneel, as we would do if a favor were bestowed upon us by an earthly prince. Even if the Church had not prescribed this posture, our own sense of propriety would impel us to it."

"There was a time when the Orientals stood," said the bishop; "but St. Basil says, 'it was with fear and trembling, with silence, and downcast eyes.'"

Uncle Hallam said: "Kneeling is the custom now in both the Greek and Latin Churches, as well as with Lutherans, and nearly all the Christian world."

Mrs. Sands asked: "Did not the posture of the Apostles at the time of the institution

of the Lord's Supper, indicate that God looks more to the inner spirit, than to the outward manner?"

"I am glad you have put that question," said the bishop. "There can be no doubt that our blessed Lord looks always at the condition of the heart, rather than at a formal outward prostration; but we may gather from his own reverent posture, while as a man he knelt in prayer to the Father, that he loves in us such action as represents our inward humility; and as we are supposed to be praying while we receive, this lowly attitude seems to me the only suitable one.

"The Passover, in the time of our Lord Jesus, was observed with the posture of freedom, in memory of the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. It was a special posture. At other meals they sat erect, as we do at our table; but 'at time of Passover they were *obliged* to use this leaning composure, half reclining upon beds or couches, their left elbow upon the table, their head leaning upon the hand, or resting upon

the breast of the next neighbor (as did St. John's upon the bosom of Jesus), their legs under them, and their feet lying out behind, to show their perfect liberty from all servitude.'"

"It is the plea of some that it is idolatry to kneel," said Mrs. Sands.

"That comes of the Romish doctrine of the Real Presence—the bread, which is a 'creature' of God, being changed into our Lord's Body, and the wine, which is also a 'creature,' being changed into his Blood. To kneel with any adoration of these elements, would indeed be idolatry; but if we bow our knees in deep humility, with the inward sense of our unworthiness before God, and if we lift up our hearts to that Saviour who has died to accomplish our salvation, and who now sits at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for us, it is no idolatry or adoration."

"No more than to kneel with the Prayer Book or Bible before us," said Miss Bent.

Mrs. Sands called attention to the expla-

nations at the end of the Communion Office in the English Book of Common Prayer:

"'Whereas, it is ordained in this office for the administration of the Lord's Supper, that the communicants shall receive the same kneeling (which order is well meant for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue), yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance or infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be mis-construed and depraved, it is hereby declared that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received or unto any corporeal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians), and

the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one.'"

"But the bread and the wine are more to us than common bread and wine," said the bishop. "I wish you fully to understand that although they are not corporeally changed, they are by consecration, or holy prayer to God, made to us the visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, and do not merely figure to us the breaking of Christ's Body, and the shedding of his Blood, but are pledges of a real part and portion given us in the death and sufferings of our dear Lord Jesus; that is, if we are faithful recipients. So says Bishop Patrick, in his commentary upon this subject."

"It seems to me that all the glory and sacredness of the Eucharistic feast are made but mockery and profanity, by the bowings, and genuflexions, and changes from the simplicity of our Lord's institution," said Mrs. Sands.

The bishop responded: "It is but charity

to believe that those who adopt these perversions are sincere in their worship; but it is none the less our duty to strive against all error, and to pray that the unblemished truth may prevail among Christians, and that all the world may return to the pure faith once delivered to the saints."

"Some say that there is no command in the Scriptures for women to participate in this Holy Communion," said Miss Bent.

Mr. Asher remarked: "There needed no direct command. The Passover embraced both men and women. The women were bound by an express law, to be present at the Passover. In forming the societies that were severally to eat the lambs, ordinarily men, women and children, masters and servants (if circumcised) were entertained together; and there could not be fewer than ten persons, nor more than twenty, at the eating of a lamb."

Miss Bent said: "That reminds me of the rubric in the Communion Office of the English book, that 'There shall be no celebration

of the Lord's Supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the priest, according to his discretion;' and that 'If there be not above twenty persons in the parish, of discretion to receive the Holy Communion, yet there shall be no Communion, except four (or three at least) communicate with the priest.'"

The bishop said: "Besides this practice among the Israelites of the women partaking of the Paschal Lamb, we have the New Testament Scripture, that the women continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the Apostles; and that the promise of the Holy Ghost was unto all who should believe, and repent, and be baptized; and that thousands of souls were added unto the Apostles, and continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers. Then we have also the practice of the ages, from earliest Christianity, that women were admitted to the holy feast."

Cousin Minnie asked: "What is the mean

ing of giving the bread and wine to the people in 'order'?"

"In their turn," said the bishop. "First to the clergy—bishop, priests, and deacons,—and then to the people; and it may also mean, with due regard to the propriety of their coming in small companies to surround the chancel.

"St. Paul cautions the Corinthians against any irregularity or disorderliness in the reception of the Lord's Supper. There should be no unseemly haste, each taking before other his own supper; no rude pushing for precedence at the Lord's table, that we may speedily partake, and leave holy services for a morsel of common meat at a home dinner."

"That has always seemed so singular to me," said Miss Bent. There is such joy in the services of the sanctuary, that I could stay all day without a thought of earthly food."

"We come now to the words of administration," said the bishop. "The first part, 'The Body,' or 'The Blood of our Lord Jesus

Christ,' was the only form used in St. Ambrose's time, at the delivery of the bread and wine, to which the people said 'Amen.' The next words, 'preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life,' were added by St. Gregory, but not exactly in this form. It was simply, 'The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul. Amen.' The two forms were united in the first book of Edward VI. The second book of Edward left them out, and had only the latter part of our present form, 'Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving;' or 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.' In Queen Elizabeth's time, it was arranged and ordered as in our Book of Common Prayer. The Scotch Liturgy has only the first clause, as in the first book of Edward VI."

"I am so glad that we have the two united," said Nannette. "The present form seems to me perfect."

"I should not like either of them left out,'

said the bishop. "It may be that a life-long use has made them very precious to me; but to every thoughtful mind they must be full of holy meaning. The Roman Church has not the words of Christ, 'Take and eat this,' etc."

"Of course not," said Mr. Asher; "the form is aptly chosen by our branch of the Church Catholic, to put away the Romish error. The distinction is obvious between 'the Body and Blood that are to preserve our body and soul,' and 'this bread and wine which God makes a sign and pledge of his sacramental grace to us.'"

"Ought we to say 'Amen' after the first sentence?" asked Cousin Minnie.

"Yes, daughter," replied the bishop; "that word is, or should be, the earnest prayer that the blessings and benefits of our Lord's crucified Body and shed Blood may surely be ours."

Miss Bent said: "It is proper to receive the elements with ungloved hands, is it not?"

"Yes, my child," replied the bishop. "St. Cyril directs the communicant to 'receive

the Body of Christ in the hollow part of the right hand, which he is to support with the left, thus forming a cross.

"I hesitate to speak of such things, lest they seem to some an essential, rather than a simple propriety. I desire, my dear children, to observe all the decencies of our holy religion, from the inward promptings of the soul. There is a certain delicacy that would prevent me from taking the consecrated bread with gloved palm, and the impulse should be to stretch out both hands for the cup of blessing; but oh! let the main thought dwell upon the inestimable 'bread of heaven, that is to save both soul and body from the power of eternal death, and that fountain of all cleansing, which will wash out every defilement, and make us meet for communion with the holy God. My dear children, if ever we approach within sight of the celestial joys while we are upon the earth, it is when we are kneeling for such strengthening and refreshing, as will enable us to discern the Lord's Body.

"Let us strive, then, to keep our minds fixed during the whole Communion season, upon that glorious world—that kingdom of heaven, which has been opened to all believers by him who suffered in his own Body on the Cross, that he might overcome for us the sharpness of death."

Miss Bent said: "I have found great help in my 'Companion to the Altar.' One's thoughts are so apt to wander, that it is well to have some aid to devotion while the people are communicating."

"The time is so short, that we ought to be able to spend it in heavenly meditations, without worldly distractions," said the bishop. "We must remember those who are receiving, and pray for them as well as ourselves. We are bound together in a sweet and mystical union in this holy sacrament. Our hearts must be full of love toward every member of Christ, our glorious Head. The gentle steps of the dear pastor, drawing near to each one who covets and seeks celestial food, must bring to mind the pierced feet

of Jesus coming to us with the great salvation. The hands of the priest, held out to us with the bread and the wine, should make us think of the pierced hands of Jesus, all day long outstretched to nourish and to bless us. The taking of the sacred emblems should fill us with everlasting thanksgiving and joy for that promise of our dear Lord, 'If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'"

Mrs. Sands asked: "Is it obligatory to kneel throughout the whole time of the celebration of the holy Eucharist?"

"The Church has no rule in this respect," said the bishop. "It is left to every devout soul, to spend the time after communicating, in such way as shall most conduce to his spiritual advancement; but it is most unseemly to be gazing around, with careless, irreverent posture, as if we who have received have no prayers or praises to offer for ourselves, or for our brethren who are participating in the blessed feast. To some

there is absolute physical pain in long kneeling, and the bodily torture unfits the mind for holy contemplation; therefore each person must judge for himself what shall be his outward posture; but let the spirit be deeply humble before Almighty God, and filled with truest reverence and love."

Cousin Minnie bowed her head in her hands. The time was drawing so near when she would have this high privilege of the "holy mysteries," and be "a very member incorporate in the mystical Body of God's dear Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." She did not forget that she had been from infancy "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," but she felt that the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ "admits into a closer union with Jesus, than the soul ever knows before," that to "eat of that meat and to drink of that cup," makes us indeed "one with Christ," and seals to the faithful that covenant, which promises the everlasting kingdom.

Uncle Hallam called attention to the rubric concerning the consecration of more bread and wine, if necessary. He said: "If the old custom of sending to the priest the names of all who would be present prevailed now, we should never come to this emergency of spending the consecrated elements before all have communicated."

"The need rarely occurs," said the bishop. "The clergy soon learn to judge with tolerable accuracy how to provide. If any of the consecrated elements remain, they are reverently placed upōn the table, and covered with a fair linen cloth."

"It is a departure, then, if a scarlet cloth is used," said Miss Bent.

The bishop remarked: "There is a manifest importance in every rule laid down in the Prayer Book, therefore all these rubrics should be strictly adhered to. The Church had been brought out of such great tribulation, and superstition, and heresies, that God seems to have hedged it about purposely with these laws and restraints, and

it appears to me a presumption, and a running into temptation, to depart in any way from the wise order prescribed for us. It is by little deviations from the right, that evils grow to magnitude and importance.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. ASHER said, "The Lord's Prayer comes in very sweetly after we have obeyed his dying injunction, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' People who abruptly leave the house of God, as soon as they have communicated, lose a very precious part of the devotions."

"Moreover it is an act of disrespect," said the bishop. "We would not so carelessly leave our own table, much less the house of our host, and how can we rush so unceremoniously from the table and the house of our God. There are occasions when it is a necessity; God will know and pardon these; but all light and needless excuses are vain before him. 'He will not suffer his honor to be given to another.'"

"We call what follows the reception, the

Post Communion, do we not?" asked Cousin Minnie.

"Yes, daughter," replied the bishop, "and you will see how fitting a sequel it is to the previous service."

"It is a thanksgiving after our great Feast," said Nannette.

"The Lord's Prayer is said to have been always used just where we have it in the office for the Holy Communion," said Uncle Hallam. "It concludes with the doxology, 'for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, amen'; and that is designed as an act of praise for the benefits received in the holy sacrament."

"The next prayer," said the bishop, "is the eucharistic prayer, or the thanksgiving that God vouchsafes to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and does assure us thereby of his favor and goodness toward us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body

of his dear Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people. This sentiment or truth, comes in so appropriately after our Lord's Prayer, in which we acknowledge ourselves as brethren—the children of 'Our Father.' The thanksgiving continues, 'and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son.'"

"It seems singular," said Mrs. Sands, "that people are so highly elated by the hope and expectation of earthly wealth, and yet regard so lightly the heavenly inheritance. I know what it is to look more eagerly for the things of time, than for the things of eternity, but as I draw near to the grave, I thank God that the riches of this world seem but dross, in comparison with the wealth that can not perish."

"The everlasting kingdom," said the bishop. "What glory in the words! When we think that if all the earthly potentates were to pour their riches into this kingdom of heaven, they would contribute nothing in

comparison with what is laid up for those who love God, we can in some degree conceive what the divine glories must be; only in a small degree, however."

Mr. Asher said: "One of the sweetest of all joys, is the Christian communion, and the communion with all saints. We have that here in its imperfectness; but we say, 'And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.'"

"We may prove unworthy this fellowship," said the bishop; "we may cast it off, and walk with the ungodly, and we may fail to deserve it through our indolence. The angels and saints are diligent to do God's holy will, and if we continue in the holy fellowship we must do good works. We can not be merely contemplative Christians. There is

no such thing as a child of God, except he bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Remember this, my children, and work while the day lasts, or you will surely lose the blessing and the reward, and be cast out from the company of the redeemed."

"Grandpa," said Nannette, "I wonder that we do not walk the earth with a lighter step when we feel ourselves to be the children of such a father as God. I am so proud of you, and love you so, that as I think of my relationship I could sing for gladness."

"You have the true idea, daughter. The Church contemplates just this state in those who are allied to the dear Lord by a precious adoption. She teaches us to break forth in the angelical hymn, 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.'"

"We call it the angels' hymn, not only from the first part, that was sung by them

at the nativity of our Lord Jesus, but also from the last, which is an echo of the heavenly voices that we read of in the Rev elations of St. John the divine," said Mr. Asher.

"The whole is an Ascription to the blessed Trinity," said the bishop. "The second part is especially addressed to our gracious Redeemer, 'O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je sus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

"'For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.'"

"How blessed it is!" said Miss Bent. "It is truly called 'angelical'; but who composed this exact form?"

"The first part of it is as ancient as the liturgy of St. James, and you know he was one of the Apostles, and the first bishop of Jerusalem," said Mr. Asher. "The latter portion is variously ascribed. Some say it was by St Hilary, bishop of Poictiers, and others by Telesephorus, about the year of our Lord 139 It is also said that 'with very little difference, this hymn is found in Clement's Constitutions, book seventh, chapter forty-eighth.'"

"I am glad to learn all these things about so ancient and beautiful a hymn," said Miss Bent. "Was not St. Hilary very zealous against the Arian heresy?"

"Yes," replied the bishop; "and his zeal drew upon him the enmity and persecution of the party with Saturninus at its head, who prevailed on the emperor Constantius to exile him to Phrygia. He staid there four years, and then was permitted to return to his see, where he lived till the year 367. His arguments against Arianism are to be valued by all who love the honor of our Lord Christ. We must not fail to distinguish him from the

bishop of Arles, who was not quite orthodox in his religious views."

"Telesephorus was bishop of Rome in the year of our Lord 150," said Mr. Asher. "We know that the Gloria in Excelsis was of very ancient use in the Eastern Church. The Roman missal puts it in the beginning of the office; but it seems appropriately placed in our book, after we have participated in the holy sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Saviour."

"The people always join heartily in this hymn of praise," said Miss Bent; "but I wish we could oftener have Zeuner's excellent music for it. That which is generally sung is not easy for the congregation. I almost invariably hear discords. It is better adapted for a quartette choir."

Nannette said, "Grandpapa, it would be very singular for us to keep silent, when the angels are rejoicing over every sinner that repenteth, would it not?"

"Strange indeed," said the bishop. "And we must never forget how great a privilege

it is to join with the celestial choir, and we must strive to sing with their pure spirit, so far as is possible, casting out all things from our souls that is not in harmony with heaven."

"How fitting it is, that after this high service, and our obedience to the dying command of Jesus, we should have the blessing of peace," said Uncle Hallam.

"It is in accordance with our Lord's act toward his disciples after his last meal with them before he was parted from them," said the bishop. "The first part of our precious benediction is taken from Philippians iv. 6, 7, and the latter part is from the Old Testament Scripture, Numbers vi. 24–26.

"This blessing of peace we should receive as from God himself. If the bishop is present he pronounces it, and priests and deacons are upon their knees with the people. We are not to repeat it, but we should silently pray that we may be worthy to have this peace rest upon us."

"You spoke to us of the 'major benediction'

when we were upon the Morning Prayer," said Nannette.

"I am glad you remember, daughter," said the bishop. "The usual benediction with the Greeks was 'Go in Peace' or the like words; but it seems to me that nothing is lacking, in this, our admirable combination of the Mosaic and Christian forms. It does indeed appear as if it was 'by the aid of the Holy Ghost,' that our invaluable Book of Common Prayer was compiled with all of its various devout offices.

"See how in this blessed communion service we are led higher and higher, in our sublime worship of Almighty God, until the peace that passeth all understanding is truly ours, through God's gracious benediction. O, my dear children, how can we ufficiently estimate the preciousness of such an institution as this supper of our Lord, which is divinely appointed to bring us into direct communication with the Saviour of our souls!

"Is it possible that any for whom Christ

has died, and for whom he has provided this rich Feast for a perpetual remembrance of his death, and for the constant strengthening and refreshing, and keeping alive his grace within us, can turn away and choose instead the beggarly elements of this wicked world?"

Mr. Asher said: "The six collects that are added, are for occasional use, 'at the discretion of the minister, after the collects of the morning or evening prayer or communion.' They breathe the very spirit of the Bible, and are taken from it almost word for word. They ask for safety in worldly changes, for preservation of our souls and bodies, for a blessing on God's word, for directions and success in all our undertakings, for pardon for imperfections in our former prayers, and for the acceptance of such of our devotions as have been according to God's holy will."

"They fall pleasantly on the ear, and always reach the heart of a true and devout Christian Churchman," said Uncle Hallam.

"There is a ring in these prayers that we find in nothing extempore; certainly they catch the inspiration of heaven, and bring it down to earth; and our souls are lifted by it, to the very presence of him who loves the earnest petitions of his children, and will surely grant what is best for us to obtain."

Nannette said: "There is one more rubric at the end of our Communion Office. 'Upon the Sundays and other Holy Days (if there be no Sermon or Communion) shall be said all that is appointed at the Communion, unto the end of the Gospel concluding with the Blessing.'

"'And if any of the consecrated Bread and Wine remain after the Communion, it shall not be carried out of the Church; but the Minister and other communicants shall, immediately after the Blessing, reverently eat and drink the same.'"

The bishop said: "There has been on the part of some, a misunderstanding of the first portion of this rubric, owing to its peculiar construction; but the House of Bishops, at a

Convention held in Philadelphia in 1821, declared the sense of the words in parentheses, to be, 'Although there be no Sermon or Communion,' therefore the Ante-Communion service is to be said on every Lord's day, and on every holy day."

Mrs. Sands asked: "Are we not accused of superstition in our observance of the latter part of this rubric?"

The bishop said: "Only by such as have no especial sense of the fitness of things, or by persons who have been brought up to regard us as holding the Romish idea of transubstantiation. The remains of the consecrated elements have from the earliest ages been preserved from common uses. Sometimes they were sent to the sick and absent members of the Church, and to prisoners, and penitents at the point of death. Sometimes they were burned, and in the year 1662 they were ordered to be eaten and drank in the church, by the clergy and the other communicants, as the custom had been in primitive times. This was in order to prevent the carrying

about, and lifting up of the elements, to be gazed upon in adoration as the Romanists used to do, and as our branch of the Church, in her twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth articles expressly forbids."

"I find in the English book several rubrics that we have not," said Mrs. Sands.

"You mean the one saying that 'the bread and wine shall be provided by the curate and the church wardens, at the charges of the parish,'" said Mr. Asher. "Another, that 'every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter is to be one; and yearly at Easter every parishioner shall reckon with the parson, vicar, or curate, or his or their deputy or deputies, and pay to them or him all ecclesiastical duties, accustomably due, then and at that time to be paid.'"

"You will perceive," said the bishop, "that the first part of this rubric might make one careless of his duty, which is to take upon every possible occasion, the Lord's Supper; and the latter part refers especially to the

tithes paid to the clergy, according to the English laws of Church and State.

"The next rule, concerning the alms at the Communion Offertory, we have in substance at the end of the Scriptural sentences."

Nannette said: "It has been so pleasant to go over this service, grandpapa, that I almost wish we were to begin it again."

The bishop replied: "My words of explanation have been very feeble. It is impossible for man to do justice to such a theme. Recollect that I have not presumed to interpret the divine mysteries; I have only given you the Church's view of this holy sacrament, so far as God has been pleased to reveal it to her. What he has reserved, we have no right to attempt to look into, until such time as he shall make all the wonders of his grace plain to us in his everlasting kingdom.

"I desire now, that we all meditate much upon the love of Jesus, as manifested in this wondrous provision for our spiritual growth

and strength, and that when on All Saints' Day, we kneel at the altar of our dear Lord, we may truly and heartily offer ourselves, our souls and bodies unto him, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice; and that we may, in the worthy reception of his consecrated creatures of bread and wine, discern, after an heavenly and spiritual manner, the Body and Blood of him who was crucified for us, that he might preserve us, body and soul, unto everlasting life."

CHAPTER IX.

THE bright festival of All Saints had come at last. Minnie had been constant in prayer and thoughtful meditation upon the renewal of her baptismal covenant. She knew how solemn a thing it is to make a perfect consecration of one's self "to him who merits all our love." Her desire was to do with the whole heart and soul what she was about to promise, and her loving Lord helped her to reach the morning of that blessed day with a steadfast purpose to lead a new and holy life.

A few of the golden and crimson leaves yet lingered upon the shrubs and trees. The light of the Indian summer seemed to shoot over into the November month.

Nannette and Minnie had risen early, and after private devotions, had gone out into

the beautiful park, where they walked, talking together of the holy service in which they were soon to be engaged.

"It seems here almost like the Garden of Eden, where God talked with Adam," said Nannette, "only we are trying to obey our Heavenly Father, and so are not afraid of his voice, as it calls to us among the trees."

"I think that, but for your grandfather's gentle teachings, I could never have felt such sweet confidence in God's love," said Minnie. "It must be dreadful to be afraid of God,—to wish to hide one's self from him whose eye is all-seeing. Now I want him to be close beside me, and to watch always over me. Oh! if I can be kept as the apple of his eye, and under the shadow of his almighty wing!"

The bishop was but a step behind the dear children. His heart yearned after them as the heart of Jesus yearns toward those who are trying to live unto him.

Seating them beside him on a bench by the "great fountain," he spoke earnestly of

the all-cleansing power of the blood of Jesus he told them that after they had striven with their might to lead a consistent Christian life, and yet could see how many were the times of stumbling, and imperfection, it would be to them such peace to rest on the merits of that spotless Saviour, and to feel that the crimson stream which flowed from his blessed side would make them white and clean in the dear Father's eyes, so that he would impute to them the righteousness of his beloved Son.

The good bishop knew very well the timidity of the young disciple, and what tenderness and encouragement are needed to help such in the first faltering step; so he dwelt on the love, and the mercy, and the sweet pity of Jesus for his children here in this wilderness of sin. And Minnie knew that we are not left alone to battle with the hosts of Satan, but that "they that are with us are more than they that are against us," and that with a firm reliance on the divine help, we can have the victory.

"All Saints' Day is a delightful season for the giving up of one's self to God," said the bishop. "It is no small joy to be united to the redeemed who are in Paradise, and to feel ourselves one with the Church of God there, as well as here."

"Grandpapa," said Nannette, "how precious the prayer is for this day! 'O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son, Christ our Lord, grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'"

"It is indeed precious," said the bishop; "as are also all the services for this day."

"We put away the many festivals of Rome, and unite the commemoration of all the virtuous dead in one feast, do we not?"

"Yes, and we must recollect, in our observance of this holy day, that it originated

in the destruction of idol worship in the heathen Pantheon at Rome, in the seventh century, and the dedication of the place as a Christian temple, and to the honor of 'all martyrs.' It used to be celebrated upon the first of May, but was, in the ninth century, removed to the first of November, and from the days of the Reformation, has been devoted to the memory of 'All Saints.'"

"It does not in any way embrace the Romish doctrine of the invocation of saints, does it?"

"Oh no, my child; it is but God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom we may pray. But it is pleasant to think of our dear departed ones on this sacred festival, and of the holy ones of all the ages, who have gone hence in the Lord, and have left us the glorious heritage of their good examples. We owe it to the memory of those who have made this life beautiful and fragrant with their many virtues, to dwell upon these virtues, and to try and imitate them. You remember how our Lord Jesus

said of the good deed done unto him by the gentle Mary, 'Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel is preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.'

"The worthy deeds done to his children on earth, our blessed Lord accepts as done unto himself, and it is right to speak to each other of the holy works of the departed, and to pray to be as faithful and diligent as these servants of God have been."

"How blessed the lessons for this day! grandpapa," said Nannette. "I shall never forget two things in the 'Wisdom of Solomon,' concerning the Christian dead: 'There shall no torment touch them,' and 'They shall receive a beautiful crown of gold.'"

The bishop said: "All the chapters for to-day are aptly chosen. Those from the New Testament give us the example of the faithful ones, who walked as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, seeking a better country, and embracing the heavenly promises, though

seeing them afar off, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and looking to the reward which was to come by and by in the eternal kingdom."

"You quote from Hebrews, grandpapa?"

"Yes, daughter, that glorious chapter that is to strengthen our faith. And then we have a vision of the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the multitudes shall be gathered together before '*the Word of God*,' the '*King of kings and Lord of lords*,' that '*Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us*,' and gave himself to be the life of a dying world.

"There is a glowing picture of the Church, the Bride of Christ,—his Wife, made ready,—arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. There is gladness and rejoicing, small and great crying 'Alleluia,' 'Amen,' 'Alleluia.' Jesus, *the Word*,' '*the King*,' '*the Lord*,' is represented as clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.

"To those who have been cleansed by the red flow from Calvary, this vesture will have

no terror. It will be beautiful, and very precious. But for it, our own robes would be black with the defilement of sin, instead of white, and clean, and pure."

The little party arose and walked silently to the house. Each soul was intent on the joys that came from the love of God. The faces of all shone with a cheerful glow. None but the true and earnest Christian can have a celestial light upon his brow. There is an obvious distinction between the gladness that is begotten of this world, and the perfect peace that comes from above.

The church bells rang out a triumphant peal. The people carried memorial offerings of sweetest flowers, and laid them upon the altar. Nannette and Minnie made a fragrant wreath to lay at the feet of Jesus.

"Who knows," said Nannette, "but our dear Lord, seeing our love in this little tribute, may accept it as he did the precious ointment of Mary."

"Since our hearts go with it, I am sure he will," said the earnest Minnie.

There was the glorious service of prayer and praise, and then a little band of both the aged and the young went to the chancel for the sacred confirmation rite.

To the question "Do ye here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name at your baptism; ratifying and confirming the same; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors undertook for you?" there was a firm and audible answer, "I do.

The versicles and responses between the bishop and congregation filled all hearts with courage:

"Our help is in the name of the Lord."

"Who hath made heaven and earth."

"Blessed be the name of the Lord."

"Henceforth, world without end."

"Lord, hear our prayer."

"And let our cry come unto thee."

Each candidate whose soul was true and sincere in repentance for sin, and faith in the

Lord Jesus, and the steadfast purpose to lead a new life, felt the personal application of the prayer, "Almighty and ever living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water, and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins, strengthen them we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter; and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of Grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and forever. Amen."

It was with especial tenderness that the bishop placed his hands upon the head of Minnie. He had learned so thoroughly the earnestness of her spirit in this act of giving herself wholly to the blessed Saviour, that he could havo no doubt of her acceptance with God; yet she was the youngest of the band before him, and her combat might be long and wearisome ere she could hold the palm of victory.

No wonder that the good man's voice was tremulous as he prayed, "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace, that she may continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until she come unto thy everlasting kingdom."

When all were confirmed, the bishop desired them to arise for a moment from their knees.

"My beloved," said he, "it is with great joy that I stand in the gate of the camp, and greet you who have come hither professing yourselves on the Lord's side in the combat with the world, the flesh, and the devil. But it is my duty to tell you, that you have embraced no idle service. You can not rest at this entrance. The Lord God of Israel calls, 'Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, through the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' Every thing that is sinful, however dear to your soul, you are to destroy. The Lord is your helper; you

have already acknowledged this. He will never leave you, nor forsake you, if you cling to him with all your heart. He has made provision for your strengthening and refreshing by the way. If you would not falter, nor grow weak, nor die, you must take of that substance which he has commanded to be received. Every time that you eat and drink of this sacred food, as he directs, you will feel a renewed vigor in your Christian warfare. His table is spread today. A loving Lord calls you to this rich feast. Let not one of you fail to come, and 'May the Lord be with you.'"

The full-voiced congregation responded, "And with thy spirit."

All kneeling down, the bishop said, "Let us pray."

The words which our Lord Jesus taught his disciples are fittest utterances for us when we have been obedient children. They are properly placed in our offices of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Supper of the Lord.

It was with the sweetest emotion that Minnie said, "Our Father, who art in heaven." To be as a little child is so blessed!

The bishop asked that what he had done should not be an empty or insignificant act. "'Almighty and everlasting God, who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good, and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom, after the example of thy holy Apostles, we have now laid our hands, to certify them, by this sign, of thy favor and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy Fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.'"

The prayer for divine direction and protection followed, and the class was dismissed

with a solemn blessing; but not one of the newly confirmed delayed to participate in the holy eucharistic feast, so faithful was the bishop in his instructions and so earnest every soul, in the religion of Jesus.

At evening, when the household assembled in the bishop's study, the bond of union was perfect. All were one in Christ. Nannette asked to repair to the drawing-room for devotions, that her organ might help them; and at Minnie's suggestion they sang the precious hymn,—

"Blest is the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

"Before our Father's throne
We pour united prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one;
Our comforts and our cares.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

"When we at death must part,
How keen, how deep the pain:
But we shall still be join'd in heart,
And hope to meet again.

"From sorrow, toil, and pain,
And sin, we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign
Throughout eternity."

The bishop said: "As this is All Saints' evening, we will sing the last three verses of the hymn just before this, in the Prayer Book. It is the twenty-sixth."

"Behold th' innumerable host
Of angels clothed in light:
Behold the spirits of the just
Whose faith is changed to sight.

"Behold the bless'd assembly there
Whose names are writ in heaven;
Hear God, the Judge of all, declare
Their sins, through Christ, forgiven.

"Angels, and living saints and dead,
But one communion make:
All join in Christ, their vital head,
And of his love partake."

"There is such sublimity and dignity in this holy religion, that allies us to God, and the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Who would not be a Christian, and enter into joys that the world knows not of, and anticipate an eternal blessedness!

"My children, let me congratulate you that God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, and that he gives you a peace that passeth all understanding."

THE END.